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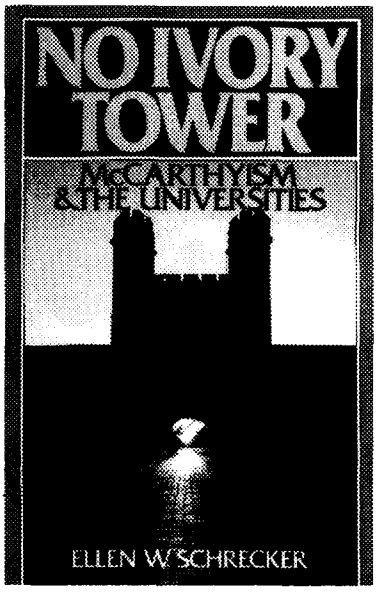

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Marina Tsvetaeva

ATTIC LIFE

I'm writing in my attic—I think it's the 10th of November—since everyone started living by the new calendar I don't know the dates any more.

I know nothing of S.[1] since the month of March, the last time I saw him was January 18, 1918, how and where—someday I'll say, right now I don't have the strength.

I live with Alya and Irina (Alya is six, Irina is two years and seven months) on Boris and Gleb Lane across from two trees, in an attic room which used to be Seriozha's. There's no flour, no bread, under the desk there's about twelve pounds of potatoes, the leftovers of a bushel "loaned" by our neighbors—the entire pantry! The anarchist Charles took away Seriozha's "élève de Breguet" antique gold watch— I've gone to see him a hundred times—at first he promised to return the watch, then he said that he'd found a buyer for it but had lost the key, then that he'd found a key for it at Sukhareva but had lost the buyer, then that fearing a search he'd given it to someone else to keep, then that it had been stolen from the person he gave it to for safekeeping but that he was a rich man and wouldn't bicker over such trifles, then, turning nasty, he started to scream that he couldn't be expected to answer for other people's things.—The upshot: no watch, no money. (That sort of watch goes for 12,000 now, i.e. fifty lbs. of flour.) The same thing happened with the baby scales. (Charles again.)

I live on donated meals (children's). Not long ago the wife of the shoemaker Gransky—a thin, dark-eyed woman with a pretty, martyred face—the mother of five children—sent me a lunch ticket and a little "doughnut" for Alya through her oldest daughter (one of her girls had left for camp). Mrs. G-man, our neighbor on the floor below sends the children soup from time to time and today forcibly "loaned" me a third thousand. She herself has three children. Small, gentle, worn down by life: by the nanny, by the children, by a

---

Editor's Note: *Attic Life* is excerpted from *Moscow Notes 1919–1920*, part of a manuscript which was never completed. Translation copyright © 1986 Jamey Gambrell.

1. Sergei Efron, Tsvetaeva's husband.

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powerful husband, by the routine—immutable as the movement of the spheres—of lunches and dinners. (In our home—a meal is always a comet!) She helps me secretly, hiding it from her husband, whom, as a Jew and a lucky man, I—in whose home everything but the soul has frozen and nothing save books has escaped destruction—naturally cannot help but irritate.

Occasionally, when they remember my existence—and I'm not blaming them for we've known each other a short time—the actress Z-tseva and her husband help me, she, because she loves poetry, and her husband because he loves his wife. They brought potatoes, and several times the husband has torn down beams from the attic and sawed them up.

There's also R.S. T-kin, the brother of Mrs. Ts-lin, whose literary evenings I used to attend. He gives matches, bread. Kind, sympathetic.

—And that's it.—

Balmont[2] would be glad to, but he himself is destitute. (If you drop by, he always gives you food and drink.) His words: "I keep feeling pangs of conscience, I feel I should help"—are already help. People don't know how immensely I value words! (They're better than money, for I can pay with the same coin!)

My day: I get up—the upper window is barely gray—cold—puddles—sawdust—buckets—pitchers—rags—children's dresses and shirts everywhere. I saw. Start the fire. In icy water I wash the potatoes, which I boil in the samovar. (For a long time I made soup in it, but I once got it so clogged up with millet that for months I had to take the cover off and spoon water from the top—it's an antique samovar, with an ornate spigot that wouldn't unscrew, wouldn't yield to knitting needles or nails. Finally, someone—somehow—blew it out.) I stoke the samovar with hot coals I take right from the stove. I live and sleep in one and the same frightfully shrunken, brown flannel dress, sewn in Alexandrov in the spring of 1917 when I wasn't there. It's all covered with burn holes from falling coals and cigarettes. The sleeves, once gathered with elastic, are rolled up and fastened with a safety pin.

Cleaning is next.—"Alya, take out the basin!" A few words about the basin—it deserves them. This is the main protagonist in

2. Konstantin Dmitrievich Balmont (1867–1942). Russian poet and lifetime friend of Tsvetaeva; he emigrated to France in 1920.

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our life. The samovar stands in the basin because when the potatoes are boiling it splashes everything around. All the garbage is thrown into the basin. The basin is carried out during the day, and at night I rinse it out in the backyard. Without the basin—it would be impossible to live. Coals—sawdust—puddles . . . And the stubborn desire to keep the floor clean! I go for water to the G-mans' by the back stair: I'm afraid to run into the husband. I return happy: a whole bucketful of water and a tin can! (Both the bucket and the can—belong to others, mine have all been stolen). Then the wash, dishwashing: the dishpan and the primitive pitcher with no handles, "the playschool one," in short: "Alya, get the playschool ready for the washing!"—the cleaning of the copper mess kit and the milk can for Prechistenka (an enriched meal from the patronage of that same Mrs. G-man)—a little basket containing the purse with the lunch tickets—a muff—fingerless mittens—the key to the back entrance around my neck—and I'm off. My watch doesn't work. I don't know what time it is. So, having mustered the courage, I ask a passerby: "Excuse me, could you please tell me approximately what time it is? If it's two o'clock—I feel heartened (Come to think of it, what is the present tense? Feel heartening? Doesn't sound right.)

The route: to the kindergarten (Molchanovka, 34) to drop off the dishes—along Starokoniushennyi to Prechistenka (for the enriched meal), from there to the Prague cafeteria (with the shoemakers' tickets), from the Prague (the Soviet one) to the old Generalov's—to see if by chance there's bread on sale—from there back to the kindergarten for the lunch—from there—along the back stairs, with pitchers, bowls and cans hanging from me—not a finger free! and fright in the bargain: has the purse with the lunch tickets fallen out of the basket?!—along the back stairs—homeward. Straight to the stove. The coals are still smoldering. I blow on them. Warm them up. All meals—go into one pot: soup that's more like kasha. We eat. (If Alya has been with me, the first order of business is to untie Irina from the chair. I started tying her up after the time she ate half a head of cabbage from the cabinet when Alya and I were out.) I feed Irina and put her down for a nap. She sleeps on a blue armchair. There's a bed, but it won't go through the door. I boil coffee. I drink. Smoke. Write. Alya writes me a letter or reads. About two hours of quiet. Then Irina wakes up. We heat up the remains of the mush. With Alya's help I fish out the potatoes left stuck at the bottom of the samovar. We—either Alya or I—put Irina to bed. Then Alya goes to bed.

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At 10 o'clock the day is over. Sometimes I saw and chop for tomorrow. At 11 or 12 I am also in bed. Happy with the lamp just by the pillow, the silence, a notebook, a cigarette, and sometimes—bread.

I write badly, in a hurry. I didn't write down either the *ascensions* up to the attic—there's no staircase (we burned it)—pulling myself up on a rope—for beams, nor the *constant* burns from coals, which (impatience? embitteredness?) I grab with my bare hands, nor the running about to secondhand stores (has it been sold?) and cooperatives (are they selling anything?).

I didn't write down the most important thing: the gaiety, the keenness of thought, the bursts of joy at the slightest success, the passionate directedness of my entire being—all the walls are covered with lines of poems and NB! for notebooks. I didn't write down the trips at night to the terrible icy depths—to Alya's former playroom—for some book, which I suddenly have to have, I didn't write down Alya's and my abiding, guarded hope: wasn't that a knock at the door? Yes, someone must be knocking! (The bell hasn't worked since the beginning of the revolution, instead of a bell—there's a hammer. We live at the top and through seven doors we hear everything: every scrape of someone else's saw, every stroke of someone else's axe, every slam of someone else's door, every sound in the yard, everything, except knocking at our door!) And—suddenly—someone's knocking!— either Alya (throwing on her blue coat, made for her when she was two years old, or I, not throwing on anything—head downstairs, groping, galloping, first past the staircase with no banister (we burned it), then down those stairs—to the chain on the front door. (Actually, you can get in without our help, but not everyone knows this.)

I didn't write down my eternal, one and the same—in the same words!—prayer before sleep.

But the life of the soul—Alya's and mine—grows from my verse—from my plays—from her notebooks.

I wanted to write down *only the day.*

* * *

Alya and I:

Alya: "Marina! I didn't know how many people there were with such wonderful names! For example: Junkovsky."

I: "He's the former Governor-General of Moscow (?), Alechka."

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Alya: "Aha! I know—the governor. That's in *Don Quixote*—the governor!"

(Poor J-sky!)

* * *

I tell a story:

"You see, there was an old, ancient woman, not at all silly. A dried flower—a rose! Fiery eyes, a proudly set head, she used to be a cruel beauty. And it's all still there—only it's ju-ust about to disintegrate . . . A rose-colored dress, splendid and terrible, because she's seventy years old, a rose evening cap, delicate slippers. Under her sharp heel a taut, tightly stuffed satin pillow—also rose-colored—a heavy, dense, squeaky satin . . . And so, at the stroke of midnight—her granddaughter's fiance appears. He's a little late. He's elegant, gallant, handsome—a camisole, a sword . . ."

Alya, interrupting, "Oh Marina!—Death or Casanova!"

(She knows the latter from my plays, *Adventure* and *The Phoenix.*)

* * *

"Alechka, what do you think the last word should be in *Grandmother**? Her last word—rather, breath!—upon which she dies?"

"Of course—Love!"

"True, true, only I thought perhaps: *Amour.*"

I explain the difference between a concept and its incarnation:

"Love—is a concept, *Amour*—the incarnation. A concept—is general, round, the incarnation—is sharp—upwards! everything toward one point. Do you understand?"

"Oh, Marina, I understood!"

"Then give me an example."

"I'm afraid it won't be true. They're both too airy."

"It doesn't matter, go ahead. If it's not right, I'll tell you."

"Music—is a concept, a voice—the incarnation." (Pause) "And also: glory—is a concept, a heroic deed—the incarnation. But Marina, how strange! A heroic deed—is a concept, a hero—is the incarnation."

* * *

"Alya! What a wonderful thing—dreams!"

---

* A play which I didn't finish, and lost.

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"Yes, Marina, and also: a dress ball!"

"Alya! My mother always wanted to die suddenly: to be walking along the street and suddenly, from a building under construction—a brick would fall on her head!—and that would be it."

Alya, slightly amused: "No, Marina, I don't really like that idea, a brick. . . . Now—if the whole building!!!"

* * *

Alya, before going to sleep:

"Marina! I wish you the best of everything on earth. Maybe: of everything left on earth . . ."

* * *

If I get through this winter I'll really be *fort comme la mort*—or just *morte*—without *fort*—with an *e muet* on the end.

* * *

Grocery stores now resemble the windows of beauty salons: all these cheeses—aspics—cakes—not a whit more alive than wax dolls.

That same, slight terror.

* * *

Oh, "Wahrheit und Dichtung"! And I stop, for in this cry there is as much rapture as dissatisfaction. Goethe wanted to give the history of his life and his development simultaneously, but they didn't blend for him. Whole places seem pasted in: "hier gedenke ich mit Ehrfurcht eines gewissen X-Y-Z"—and so on for dozens of pages in a row. If he had woven these "treffliche Gelehrte" into his life, forced them to come into the room, move about, speak, there wouldn't have been such schematicness (calculation) in places: a person gets it into his head to thank everyone who contributed to his development— and so he lists them. It isn't boring—everything is significant, but Goethe himself somehow disappears, you can't see his black eyes anymore. . . .

But then—Lord!—the walks, as a boy, through Frankfurt—the friendship with the little Frenchman—the incident with the artist and the mouse—the theater—the relationship with his father—Gretchen ("Nicht küssen, 's ist was so gemeines, aber lieben, wenn's möglich ist!") their nocturnal meetings in the cellar—Goethe in Leipzig—the dance lessons—Sesenheim—Frederika—the moon . . .

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Oh, when I read that scene with the disguise, my heart trembled because—it was Frederika and not me!

The coziness of that old half-peasant house—the pastor—playing at forfeits—reading aloud . . .

Because of all this I couldn't manage to get out of bed at all today: just didn't feel like living!

* * *

How I would have raised Alya in the 18th century! Buckles on her shoes! Clasps on the family Bible! And what a dancing instructor!

* * *

Nowadays, probably because of the axe and the saw, there are far fewer *enfants d'amour*! For that matter, only the intelligentsia saws and hacks (The *muzhiks* don't count! Nothing affects them!), and the intelligentsia has never been noted for either *enfants* or *amour*.

* * *

Not long ago at Smolensky Market: a buxom peasant lass—wearing a fabulous shawl crisscrossed, her gait from the hips—and a little withered spinster—a spiteful old hag! A withered finger stuck into the girl's high bosom. An ingratiating whisper: "What's that you've got there?—a piglet?"

And the girl, pulling her shawl ever tighter around her, haughtily:—"Three hundred and eighty."

* * *

Now today, for instance, I ate all day long, though I could have written all day long. I really don't want to die of starvation in 1919, but even less do I want to make a pig of myself.

* * *

By nature I can't abide surpluses. I'll either eat something or give it away.

And one could, so it wouldn't seem so terrifying, imagine things this way: a loaf of bread doesn't cost 200 rubles, but 2 kopecks, like it used to, but I don't have those 2 kopecks—and never will.

And the Tsar is in Tsarskoe Selo as always—only I'll never go to Tsarskoe Selo, and he—will never come to Moscow.

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* * *

Good Lord! How many Nozdrevs there are in Russia these days (who hasn't defamed whom and how, who hasn't bartered what for what!)—Korobochkas ("and how much are dead souls going for in the city now?," "and how much are female manikins going for at the market now?": me, for instance)—Manilovs ("The Temple of Friendship"—"The House of the Happy Mother")—Chichikovs (a born speculator!).

But there's no Gogol. It would be better the other way around.

* * *

Just as rare are those—what's his name?, the one with the Armenian surname, idze or adze, from Part II, so irreal that I can't even remember his name!

* * *

Alongside our ignoble life—there is another: ceremonial, incorruptible, immutable: the life of the church. The same words, the same movements—everything as it was centuries ago. Outside time, that is, outside infidelity.

We don't remember this often enough.

* * *

"No longer laughing,"
(The inscription on my cross.)

* * *

I've taken the year 1919 a bit exaggeratedly—the way people will understand it a hundred years from now: not a fleck of flour, not a speck of salt (clinker and clutter enough and to spare!), not a speck, not a mote, not a shred of soap!—I clean the flue myself, my boots are two sizes too big—this is the way some novelist, using imagination to the detriment of taste, will describe the year 1919.

* * *

My room.—I'll leave it some day surely. (?) Or, I'll never, upon opening my eyes, e-ver see anything other than: the high window in the ceiling—the basin on the floor—clothes on all the chairs—the axe—the iron (I sharpen the axe on the iron)—and the G-mans' saw.

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* * *

People, when they do visit, only irritate me: "You can't live like this. This is horrible. You need to sell everything and move."

Sell! — Easy to say! — I liked all my things too much when I bought them — and therefore no one buys them.

The year 1919 has taught me nothing about practical matters: neither thrift nor abstinence.

I take — eat — and give away bread as easily as if it cost 2 kopecks (now it's 200 rubles). And I have always drunk coffee and tea without sugar.

* * *

Is there presently in Russia — Rozanov is dead — a genuine thinker and observer who could write a genuine book about hunger: a person who wants to eat — a person who wants to smoke — a person who's cold — about a person who has but does not give, about a person who has nothing and gives; about the formerly generous — turned stingy, about the formerly miserly — turned generous, and, finally, about me: a poet and a woman, alone, alone, alone — like a lone oak — a lone wolf — like God — amid the many plagues of Moscow in the year 1919.

I would write it — if it weren't for the romantic flourish in me — my nearsightedness — all of my idiosyncrasies — which at times prevent me from seeing things as they are.

* * *

— Oh, if I were rich! —

Dear 1919, it is you who has taught me this cry! Before, when everyone had plenty, I still managed to give; and now, when no one has anything, I can't give anything, except my soul — a smile — sometimes a bit of kindling (out of frivolity) — and that's too little.

Oh, what a field of action exists for me now, for my insatiableness for love. Everyone bites at this bait — even the most complex — even I! At the moment I for one definitely love only those who give to me — who promise and don't give — it doesn't matter! — just as long as they sincerely (and maybe *not* sincerely — who cares!) wanted to give for a minute.

On a whim of hand and heart this sentence, and therefore the whole meaning, could have turned out differently and it would also have been true:

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Before, when everyone had everything, I still managed to give. Now, when I have nothing, I still manage to give.

—All right?

* * *

I give, like everything I do, from a sort of spiritual adventurism —for the smile—mine and another's.

* * *

What do I like about adventurism?—The word.

* * *

Balmont—in a woman's crisscrossed Scottish shawl—under the covers—frightful cold—steam rising like a stake—a plate of potatoes fried in coffee grinds nearby:

—"Oh, this will be a shameful page in Moscow's history! I'm not talking about myself as a poet, but as a toiler. I've translated Shelley, Calderon, Edgar Poe. . . . Haven't I been sitting with dictionaries since I was 19 instead of going out and having a good time and falling in love?!—And I'm starving—in the literal sense. Only death from starvation awaits! Idiots think hunger is—the body. No, hunger is—the soul, the whole weight of it falls directly on the soul. I'm oppressed, I'm suffering, I can't write!"

I ask for a smoke. He gives me his pipe, and orders me not to distract myself while I smoke.

"This pipe requires a great deal of concentration, so I advise you not to talk, since there are no matches in the house."

I smoke, that is, I draw with all my might—the pipe seems corked up—1/10 of a drag comes through with every draw—for fear it will go out I not only don't talk, I don't think—and—after a minute, relieved:

"Thank you—I've had enough!"

Translated from the Russian by Jamey Gambrell

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Mario Vargas Llosa

THE CULTURE OF FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF CULTURE

Writing is a solitary job. Facing a piece of paper, with pen in hand, while awaiting the surge of what—for lack of a better name—we call inspiration, there is no recourse but to pull back from one's immediate life and plunge into the intimate world of memory, nostalgia, secret hungers, intuition, and instinct: the ingredients that nourish the creative imagination. The process giving birth to a work of fiction is long, difficult, fascinating. Although I have been through it many times since writing my first story, I have never come to understand it fully.

I do not know if this happens to all writers. But, in my own case at least—even when I make a great effort towards clarity while I write, and try to maintain rational control of the story, the characters, the conversations, and the landscapes as they appear with the rhythm of my words—I can never escape a certain darkness which accompanies the conscious task, like its own shadow, in the moment of creation.

This element, springing spontaneously from hidden depths of the personality, lends a particular coloring to the story one tells. It establishes hierarchies among the characters that sometimes, quite subtly, turn our conscious intentions inside out; it tints, or saturates, what we are telling with a significance or symbolism that in some cases is not only uncongenial to our own ideas but may indeed radically contradict them. The truth is that at the moment of creation, the writer, the artist, is something more than intellect, reason, or ideas. The creator is also that shadowy zone of the personality which our conscious minds repress or ignore. In the creative process, which partakes more than a little of magic, this manages to reveal and assert itself, reestablishing that wholeness of the person which, in nearly all other activities, whether social or private, seems truncated, reduced to its conscious, obverse side.

Born of the joint effort of reason and unreason, intellect and intuition, of the free flight of fantasy and the dark designs of the unconscious—perhaps this is why the products of art and literature have

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the ability, time and again, to elude centuries and the barriers of geography and of language, keeping a freshness and power that time, far from tarnishing, only increases. The twists of fortune of the gods and men of Hellas, sung by a blind poet three thousand years ago, dazzle us still. And just like these remote predecessors of our culture, who first heard these exploits from the mouths of the rhapsodes, we too are made to experience vicariously those ceremonies of passion and adventure for which, it would seem, the human heart greedily yearns in all civilizations and all eras. The fire that sparked Shakespeare as, in his tragedies and comedies, he recreated the Elizabethan universe —from plebeian street gossip, with its sweep of picturesque types and its rich vulgarity, to the refined cunning of the power-struggles between princes and warriors, or the daintiness and torments of love and the celebration of desire—that fire blazes each time his stories materialize on stage. And in spite of chronology and distance, it goes on burning us in his verbal spell. Dreaming about the flesh-and-blood beings of his time, and about the demons that stirred them on, Shakespeare drew certain images in which the people of all epochs can find —immutable and changing—their own faces.

The miracle would not have been possible if the old bard of the beginnings of Greek civilization, and the English playwright, had not been able to rely not only on a prodigious command of language and an incandescent imagination, but on the possibility—at the moment of confronting the papyrus, or the paper—of opening the doors to their own private phantoms, of letting them move about at will and submitting themselves to the dictates of those specters. The civilizations to which both writers belonged were repressive and abusive. They perpetuated themselves by means of discrimination, inequality, and injustice. But in the specific sphere within which the two men operated—artistic creation—what we today would call "permissiveness," using our modern concept, was almost absolute. To the Greeks, the poet was a spokesman for the gods, an intermediary for the beyond, someone in whom artistic and religious values were indissolubly mingled. Unlike our own, that culture was unable to separate literature and art from morality and religion—or the spirit from the body. How then could it have hindered the work of a man whose function was that of priest and prophet, and at the same time of conjurer? The poet, the artist, the thinker, served as bridges across which men and gods, this world and the next could communicate. To the unlimited freedom which they enjoyed, Greek culture owes its development and that direction which allowed it to achieve, in ideas, in arts, and

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in letters, a prodigious wealth of invention and knowledge, and to establish models of beauty and thought which changed the history of the world, imparting to it a rationality from which derived all the technical and scientific progress of the West, as well as the gradual humanization of society. It has been said that the history of Greece is the history of the triumph of reason over the irrational conditioning characteristic of pre-Christian civilizations. No doubt this is so. But the victorious awakening of reason over the armor of superstition and taboo, which precipitated the unstoppable development of the West, would not have been possible without that ease of thought and creation which Hellenic culture allowed its philosophers and its artists. The triumph of reason was, above all, the triumph of freedom. Possibly for the first time in human history, the poet was not a man responsible for putting music and rhythm to what already existed—the collective myths and legends, the enthroned religion—and for illustrating the established morality with fables. Rather, he was a sovereign individual, given free reign over his own powers, authorized to explore the unknown through imagination, introspection, desire, and reason, and to bestow citizenship papers upon the phantasms of his spirit.

Nor would the genius of a Shakespeare be conceivable, without the unlimited freedom he enjoyed, to display the human passions with impunity, as Dr. Johnson wrote. By no means did all his contemporaries enjoy this liberty. Far from being tolerant, the Tudor age was indeed brutal and authoritarian; so much so that, in referring to the vandalistic destruction of images, paintings, architectural works, and religious books that followed the first Reformation—that of Henry VIII—the historian G. B. Harrison has compared the period to that of Germany and Russia in the days of Hitler and Stalin. A rigorous surveillance was exercised over the religious behavior of all persons, and any symptom of heterodoxy, on the part of Catholics or Puritans, led to prison, torture, or death. But the theater was considered too common and plebeian a pastime, too far below the salons, academies, and libraries where the reigning culture was produced and preserved, to merit the scrupulous control that fell, for example, to religious or political texts. Authority, in the days of Elizabeth I, forbade English historical dramas; it closed the theaters several times. Fortunately, however, playwrights were scornful of such measures, so that (again, according to Harrison), the London theater was the only place the common man could go, to hear direct and honest commentaries about life. No one—not even his contemporary, Ben Jonson, who indeed

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did find himself in trouble with the authorities on account of his writings — took fuller advantage than Shakespeare of that casual privilege, freedom of creation, granted playwrights in Elizabethan England. The result: that fresco of man and his demons — political, social, religious, and sexual — that dazzles us with its variety and subtlety and, better than armies of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists, illuminates for us the vertiginous complexity of human nature. In Shakespeare's thirty-seven theatrical works, he reduced to dust that rigid symmetry (among other things) which from the dawn of the Christian era until his day had served to categorize mankind and human actions: good or bad, saintly or sinning, libertine or chaste, extravagant or miserly. For the first time, in the Shakespearean character, appears that man in whom, as Bataille wrote, the contradictions mingle.

In speaking on the topic of freedom — perhaps the most vast and multifaceted of all themes — if one does not wish to get lost in generalities or to drown in details, but does hope to grasp reality, it is best to start out from some concrete experience, as I have tried to do with these brief references to Homer and Shakespeare. Jean François Revel has remarked that we should distrust those who claim to define freedom because, as a general rule, lying in wait behind each definition of freedom that is proposed, lurks the intention of suppressing it. And this much is true: the experience of freedom, like the experience of love, is richer than any of the formulas that attempt to express it. Yet while defining it is immeasurably difficult, nothing is easier than identifying it and knowing when it is present or absent, if it is genuine or an imitation, if we possess and enjoy it, or if they have snatched it away from us.

Therefore, rather than seeking a definition to encompass freedom entirely, in its myriad nuances, it would be more useful to trace its presence in history and evaluate the results — as would examining the perils that besiege it, and knowing what it means to an individual and a society to have or to lose it.

In almost all fields of human endeavor, as in literature, freedom sprouts up in unexpected, casual fashion, by accident or thanks to the inattentiveness of the dominant culture. For that culture leaves certain areas of endeavor unregulated or unorganized, and there, as a result of this unusual situation, individual initiative can reveal itself fully, in relative or complete dissonance with the prevailing culture. The result, in the short or the long run, is always just what we have seen embodied in the works of such as Homer or Shakespeare:

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an extraordinary creative impulse, a wind of renewal. The activity thus released, as we might say at its own risk, — through the misfortune, prejudice, or negligence of those who exercise power and who could, but fail to, regulate such activity — develops at an accelerated pace, and begins to infect its surroundings.

Does this mean that it is enough to remove the religious, political, and moral hindrances of censorship, for genius to spring forth? That once freedom reigns throughout their dominions, literature and art immediately begin to produce masterpieces? Naturally it does not. It simply means that when freedom does not exist, or is enfeebled, human creativity is diminished or worn to the point of disappearance, and literary and artistic works are mediocre and short-lived.

Let us cite one example. Why was the colonial literature of Latin America so insistently poor that today we must seek, like a needle in a haystack, one author from all those three-hundred years whose still-living word we can read with some pleasure? For one Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz[1] or one Concolorcorvo,[2] how many hundreds of indifferent poets and writers, obscure historians, garrulous playwrights lacking so much as one original idea? The literary poverty of three centuries' duration was no accident, nor was it due to a defect shared by our colonial versifiers and prose writers. The steamroller of ecclesiastic censorship, which banned the novel as a genre on the grounds that it was ungodly — the sole case in history of the absolute prohibition of an entire literary form — and subjected all printed matter to police inspection in the search for signs of heterodoxy, turned literary enterprise into a depersonalized and antiseptic ritual carried out within fixed and rigid molds. From the start, spontaneity was suppressed. Such servitude left the creator no choice but to orient his imagination toward formal ostentation. As thinking for oneself was highly risky and nearly impossible, the colonial writer had to be content, in the sphere of ideas, with respecting the established cliches and commonplaces which dogma required, and with developing his truly creative work in what was purely decorative and external: this

1. (1648–1695): Mexican nun, poet, dramatist, and intellectual, she is considered the last great author of the Golden Age of Spanish literature, and the greatest lyric poet of the colonial period.

2. The pen name of the mid-18th century Peruvian satirist, Calixto Bustamante, about whom little is known. He is thought to be the author of a satirical travel narrative reflecting contemporary manners, considered a classical example of its genre.

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explains the astonishing formal extravaganzas of what is otherwise a very ordinary and conformist art. Freedom of creation does not guarantee genius; it is merely the fertile soil from which genius has a chance of springing. When that freedom does not exist, however, it is practically certain that genius will not flower. For in the domain of creativity, it is essential that man throw himself wholly, with his conscious and his unconscious mind, with his rational faculties and his irrational turmoil, toward the unknown. Only the work that is born of human totality, and involves not only skill but moral daring, is likely to transcend the barriers of time and place. This rarely occurs in those repressive cultures, whether religious or ideological, in which because of external policing (censorship) or internal (self-censorship), the creator must exercise a systematic, rational vigilance over whatever he writes, so as not to cross the limits of what is tolerated.

In spheres as far distant from literature as artisanry and commerce, the eruption of freedom through a conjunction of circumstances and factors—none of which obeyed a decision on the part of those who wielded power or those who suffered under it—likewise produced changes just as far-reaching in the life of society as those proceeding in the world of intellect and sensibility, from the greatest artistic creations. To confirm it, we rely on a notable recent study by Professor Fernand Braudel. In his monumental work, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, dedicated to the study of the Western world from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century through the production of objects, utensils, techniques, and exchange, he masterfully reveals to us the astonishing transformation wrought on the development of society by the appearance of free trade and its environment, the marketplace. As in the domain of creativity, the rise of an independent and sovereign space into which human action could throw itself without conditions, could as it were flow freely, in sole accord with the interest and will of the individual as it might occur to him to buy or sell, in order to produce or consume, revolutionized the foundations of society. The consequences are the same as those incited by the exercise of freedom in art or science: movement, progress, the rapid development of new techniques, the proliferation of industries, increased communication between people and between countries, the shattering of religious culture and the growing hegemony of reason; and the weakening and collapse of the old social hierarchies based on names, titles, and military function, and their replacement by new hierarchies determined by property and economic function. The rise of the city, the birth of an urban civilization as it replaced rural civi-

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lization, was an immediate result of this flowering of commercial and industrial activity, of the opening and consolidation of markets. But the most crucial consequence of the acceleration of history brought on by free trade and free production is the appearance of man in the singular, as a unique individual.

We are quite accustomed to saying and hearing that men are born equal, possessing inalienable rights; and that each man, as a moral and legal entity and a subject of history, is no less than the center of the world. So accustomed are we, that we frequently forget that this notion of the sovereign individual is, in truth, so recent as to be almost exotic, and rather forced upon a civilization throughout whose history there always predominated a collectivist vision, although voiced in different ways and with different concepts. This vision saw man as a herd, an undifferentiated mass, an anonymous group, given distinguishing features by the task—that is, the servitude—assigned him in the social mechanism, and to which he was generally bound from birth to death, like a donkey tethered to a water wheel.

The individual is as much a product of freedom as the *Iliad* or Hamlet, or the great scientific discoveries of the modern age. Only in modern times does man distinguish and free himself from the servile placenta which had gripped him since the remote prehistoric days of the herd. Only then did he acquire an individual face and a sphere of his own, when the proliferation of uncontrolled economic, social, and artistic activities and functions which allow and indeed require the exercise of the individual's spontaneity and fantasy, stimulated the evolution of philosophical and political thought, until that notion which breaks with the entire historical tradition of mankind was established: that of the sovereign individual. Ideas of social justice, egalitarian utopias, the rights of man, and of course, the theory and practice of democracy, are the most fertile blossomings of the doctrine which made the individual, that invisible speck, the center of the universe.

To have reached the point of claiming the individual as an entity possessing rights and duties, around and in service to whom the life of the community should be organized: that is, without doubt, the culmination of our human history which Benedetto Croce defined, in an evocative metaphor, as an heroic exploit of freedom.

This lovely metaphor, however, only properly embraces the culture in which we Latin Americans have been born and have moved since Columbus's three caravels, in their voyage to the land of spices,

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stumbled upon our shores. All civilizations and cultures have something to be proud of; all can boast, to greater or lesser degree, and some few to a very great degree, of having enriched the arts, sciences, and technical abilities. And in all it is possible, too, to trace here and there, in scant or abundant portions, the practice of freedom. But those enclaves in which the initiative, the whims, the high-handedness of the individual could express itself were never so numerous and constant, nor did they elsewhere interact and infect the rest of society to the point of entirely reordering it, as in the West. There is no other civilization which has, in a sense, as its birth certificate, those Homeric hexameters composed, it is said, by a blind and itinerant poet in the infancy of the West. This surely explains the might of a civilization which grew and became strong enough to dominate, bend, or transmute other cultures with its own customs, beliefs, institutions, and values; and which little by little, at times by force, at times through commerce, sometimes by a combination of the two, went about destroying, assimilating, or influencing those other cultures. To the point that today, not one of them dares renounce the idea of freedom which all countries, regimes, and doctrines affect to worship and to wish to institute, though many of them vitiate it as they endow it with dubious properties. (Isaiah Berlin has detected at least forty variations on the idea of freedom.)

True enough, then, that freedom — not an abstract freedom with contradictory definitions, but a real, attainable freedom of specific initiatives, offering itself without obstacles, or with surmountable obstacles — has been the driving force of material and social progress. It is responsible, if not for the disappearance of injustice and political abuse, at least for their radical reduction and for the awareness that they should be battled and condemned; and for humanity's most cherished collection of artistic and spiritual creations. Nevertheless, we must not forget that freedom has also exacted from mankind a burden of misfortunes, and that to conquer and preserve his freedom, man has had to pay a high price.

For it is possible that in no other sphere besides that of freedom, do we see so clearly the essential complexity of the human deed, which is never wholly positive or negative, good or bad, but always relatively more of one or the other, in quantities quite difficult to measure. These are the "contradictory truths" which Isaiah Berlin has pondered so lucidly.

In the economic sphere, that same freedom which has been the driving force of progress and development is also a source of inequality

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and creates insurmountable chasms between those who have much, little, or nothing. The curiosity and resourcefulness freedom provokes has allowed man to master sickness, to explore the depths of the sea, of matter, and of the body, and, forcing the laws of gravity, to plow through the heavens. But it has likewise allowed him to create instruments of destruction which potentially turn any one of our modern states into an entity capable of causing havoc and holocausts which would make mere pranks of the murderous exploits of such as Nero, Genghis Khan, or Tamerlane.

It is not only the sleep of reason that engenders monsters, as Goya wrote in one of his etchings. For indeed lucid reason, when fully awake and conjecturing without restraint, can also formulate impeccable theories about the inequality of human races and thus justify slavery; can demonstrate the inferiority of women, of black- or yellow-skinned peoples, and the congenital inferiority of Jews; can legitimate the extermination of the heretic and the infidel, along with conquest, colonialism, and war between nations or between classes. And, in elucidating what are assumed to be laws of history, can decide that the cause of social justice and human emancipation must of necessity entail terror, crime, torture, censorship, and concentration camps. The painstaking theories elaborated by the Marquis de Sade in the Bastille cell where he was imprisoned for maltreatment of a young lady represent not merely the rationalization of visions exacerbated to the point of madness by imprisonment and lust. They are also a shocking symbol of the self-destructive extremes to which man can be driven by the unruly practice of free thinking, acting, and creating.

Once man was able to let his imagination flow freely and opened the doors of the cage to his private demons, books and paintings became populated, as films now are, with these "monsters." They have enriched us extraordinarily, offering us that invaluable pleasure furnished by a beautiful painting or a great novel, and showing us—vividly and graphically, as art does—what we are like, what we hide, and what could be expected from us if that same unrestricted and irresponsible freedom enjoyed by the creator in fabricating his monsters were a prerogative in our own lives.

What could be expected? The disappearance of culture and history; perhaps the extinction of life itself. Or at the very least, the return of any humans who happened to survive the catastrophe of freedom to that state of nature man was in, when the accidental intrusion of freedom into his destiny snatched him from his condition some-

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where between vegetable and animal, and bore him, with the passage of centuries, towards intimacy with the atoms and the stars.

This, perhaps, is the most unsettling paradox of the many that crowd our history: freedom, the nourishing source of all the best that has befallen man and of his most ardent desire, is at the same time an abyss into which he may tumble and destroy himself. It has happened many times and, judging by the countless examples history provides, will happen again.

And nonetheless, for all its dangers, and despite the disasters to which its use and abuse may lead us, there is no doubt that individuals and nations choose freedom, when they have the opportunity to do so. And when they lack that choice, they are prepared to undertake the greatest sacrifices to achieve it. There are of course exceptions, but not many. The enemies of freedom usually are enemies only temporarily, for just the time it takes to realize, once it is gone, that the resulting impoverishment and gloom of life turn out to be too high a price for those supposed benefits of trampling freedom underfoot: tranquility and order, for example, as in the case of authoritarian dictatorships; the abolition of classes and the establishment of collectivist egalitarianism, in the totalitarian case; or the imposition of a single dogma, in the case of religious dictatorships.

Are the Iranian people satisfied with the theocratic despotism of the Shiite imams, which has now inflicted more deaths and sufferings on that country than the corrupt autocracy of the Shah? Apparently so. How else could we explain the stability which that regime seems to enjoy, or conceive of the ardent zeal with which we see the young boys and old men of what was ancient Persia now flinging themselves into the senseless butchery that is the war with Iraq? Religious faith, when lived fanatically, can perfectly well dispense with freedom, and can even impart emotional fulfillment and an illusion of happiness that freedom is unlikely to give. If we define happiness as a state of absolute accord between what man feels and the reality he lives, then indeed there can be no doubt: an enslaved people can be happier—or less unhappy—than a free people. If happiness means living without doubts or uncertainty, without the obligation constantly of questioning reality or having to choose between dissimilar options; if it means submission to a doctrine or faith which plays the part of conscience and removes man's individuality so that he fulfills himself within that doctrine and acts only within it, returning to the

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condition of one part in a collective whole, of one impersonal being in the herd—then it is perhaps not inaccurate to say that certain theocratic or political tyrannies like that of the Ayatollah, or ideological ones like Hitler's Germany, the China of the Cultural Revolution, or the Cambodia of the Khmer Rouge, grant a sort of blissful stupefaction, a happy lethargy, to those same masses whom they force into conformity, exempting them from the nuisance of having to choose or to doubt or to create.

Renouncing freedom is, of course, one possible option. It is not only nations which succumb, at times, to this temptation, under the spell of a religion or an ideology. Individual people do so as well. That among the latter there should be many who, like intellectuals and artists, depend on freedom in order to function, is only an apparent paradox. Freedom saddles man with a terrible responsibility which nobody experiences more intimately, at the very heart of his work, than the creative artist. Existentialist philosophy, which was still in vogue when I was a student, derived from the anguish of that ultimate situation: the situation of man who is condemned, on account of his free condition, to choose a self at every moment, plotting his own destiny, deciding at each instant between the vast or tiny options open to him. This distressing and heartrending state—of having to choose without respite, of having to adopt one choice and reject others through the course of every hour and every day—is simply intolerable for some intellectuals. And so they try to dodge it, disowning it. Thus are born those painstaking theories intended to prove that freedom is an abstract and relative concept, a formal privilege which accompanies power and wealth; a mirage, by means of which dominant minorities disguise the exploitation and injustice exercised upon the majorities.

Curiously enough, however, once that freedom which they call fictitious and false and classist is done away with, whether by a right-wing military dictatorship or a Marxist revolution, those who abused it so find that they are the first victims when freedom is eclipsed. That without that "mirage," it is their own work that becomes a trap and a lie, a permanent frustration. And on the other hand, that the cause of true justice does not advance one iota without it. Then artists and intellectuals go on to become its most ardent defenders. This is a phenomenon of our times that should lead us to some reflection: free countries teem with intellectuals and artists committed to totalitarian

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causes, while in repressive societies, whether of the right or left, intellectuals and artists are always in the vanguard of the struggle for freedom. (Poland and Chile, two diametrically opposing cases, are a good example of what I mean.) Should we see this simply as the creative man's characteristic spirit of contradiction, unsatisfied with what he has and ambitious for what he lacks? In any case, this much is clear: the artist and the intellectual, the principal beneficiaries of freedom, have been and in many cases continue to be its worst enemies.

In Latin America we know this very well. Great creators whose works have given our literature authority and status the world over, and who have extraordinarily enriched our language, our imagination, and our sensibilities, have not hesitated to place their prestige and their word at the service of ideologies and regimes deeply at odds with freedom. A good many of them have succumbed to the totalitarian spell of Marxism. But there are also artists and intellectuals, among them some of the first order, who have shown themselves to be accommodating and enthusiastic towards right-wing military dictatorships, even sometimes at the very moments when these regimes perpetrated their worst crimes.

In this regard, our nations have shown a discernment surpassing that of many of our intellectuals. This is something of which Latin America can be very proud before the whole world. It is true that in our countries there are scandalous inequalities, that the spectacle of poverty repeats itself like a recurrent nightmare from Bío-Bío to the Strait of Magellan, and that in the areas of education and health, work and law, there is still an enormous task to be done. But at the same time, we Latin Americans can say that, unlike what happened only a few decades ago in Europe, or what today happens frequently in the Middle and Far East and in Africa, our nations have never succumbed to the spell of despotism. Whenever they have been consulted, they have declared themselves resolutely and overwhelmingly in favor of freedom. My country has just done so, assembling in enormous numbers at the polls, against Sendero Luminoso's rallying cry not to vote. And so, before that, did the people of Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, and Ecuador (and there is no doubt that, whenever they are able, the people of Chile will do so as well.) If one analyzes all these electoral processes, one constant factor is revealed: whether the elected parties and governments be of the center-left or the center-right, they all unequivocally represent a democratic choice, a choice for coexistence in diversity, for free expression, for the alternation of powers. In all these cases, the nations consulted have se-

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verely penalized, with lesser and at times insignificant voting percentages, the parties and leaders of both extremes who embody, from different ideologies, a threat to freedom.

The lesson could not be more pertinent to our Southern latitudes. Above all, those who should learn from it are our intellectuals and all those in the habit of claiming, when they write or speak, that they represent the people. In spite of hunger, in spite of economic injustice, in spite of the lack of work and of schools and hospitals, in spite of misfortunes and the desperation that, for them, life is, our nations have not lost their appetite for freedom, nor are they prepared to follow those who, arguing that therein would lie the solution to their problems, would take it from them. Despite the frustrations in regard to material progress and social justice, or to the pace—so slow as to be nearly imperceptible—of the improvement of living conditions, that regimes of freedom have signified for them, our nations cling to them and time and again choose and prefer them, however fragile and ineffective they may prove to be, over dictatorial regimes. What dictatorship in our midst could boast of relying on the popular support once enjoyed by Mussolini or Hitler, and enjoyed today by the Ayatollah? None. And the best proof of this is the brutal repression—the torture, censorship, and crime—to which our dictatorships must resort to keep themselves in power despite the hostility of their peoples. We ought to keep this fact clearly in mind, for in the midst of the enormous difficulties our countries now face, in the context of the economic crisis which is suffocating us and threatens to undo us as nations, it offers hope: our peoples, in spite of everything, go on believing that freedom is the best choice. They may be poor, uneducated, frustrated, forsaken. But they know what they want: to be free. They doubtless could not theorize on the subject. If, one by one, we were to question those men and women who make up the common citizenry of our America, the majority would perhaps give us some vague and uncertain reasons for what, to use the Sartrean term, we would call "their election." This choice for freedom in many cases reveals itself as a blind, instinctive craving from the depths of the personality, rather than as a reasoned, conscious movement. It is a matter of divination, of a mysterious will to achieve full and supreme individuality, tearing oneself away from an undifferentiable collectivity. Such is the sovereignty of being that can only be reached through the experience of the highest responsibility: deciding on one's own; choosing in one direction or another regarding the most vital questions; being the true protagonist of one's destiny.

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A people who felt this secret urgency and who, from the herded darkness in which they moved, pined, like an obscure ideal, for that personal emancipation which marks the birth of the West—from this people were born the Homeric poems.

The blind and roving bard who, according to legend, gave life to them, initiated a tradition that would give humankind its fundamental jolt, opening the doors of social and individual life to a reserved lady who, little by little, with her magic wand, would transform history and the human condition. She did not bring us happiness—perhaps she took it from us—but she did bring progress, a greater justice, and a substantial improvement in the quality of life for those peoples who, enthroning her as their queen and lady, subjected themselves to her whims and curses. Even under the worst circumstances, our peoples offer her joyful hospitality, and when they lose her, they long for her, struggle for her, and in the end always revive her. Knowing this confirms that, in spite of their dictators and fanatics, in spite of their material sufferings and their periods of great unbalance, freedom is inseparable from the culture and the dreams of the Latin American people.

Translated from the Spanish by Amanda Powell

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René Wellek

CRITICISM IN THE UNIVERSITY

In 1948 I published, with Austin Warren as coauthor, *Theory of Literature*, the very first book in English which had this phrase in the title. It was then generally interpreted as the summa of the New Criticism, though it contained also ample information on Russian formalism, Ingarden's phenomenology, and Czech structuralism, novelties which were largely ignored. Victor Erlich wrote a good book on Russian formalism in 1954, but Ingarden's *The Literary Work of Art* had to wait for translation into English until 1973, and Jan Mukarovsky, the main theorist of the Prague Linguistic Circle, had to wait until 1977 before two volumes of his appeared with Yale University Press. I have the impression that the impact of these three trends remained limited to Slavicists and semioticians. When in the late 1960s structuralism was imported from France, two lucid expositions, Robert Scholes's *Structuralism* and Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*, treated structuralism as a completely new French invention with no other antecedents than the linguistics of Saussure. Structuralism, which found these and other propagandists, was soon exemplified by translations from Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, a Bulgarian settled in France, and Gérard Genette, but in this country I think little strictly structuralist work was produced except by semioticians. It was soon overshadowed by what is now called post-structuralism, which includes deconstruction as propagated by Jacques Derrida and his adherents, the late Paul de Man, and J. Hillis Miller. Deconstructionists had an extraordinary success in the American academy. They excited also polemical reactions: the books I discuss here can be seen mostly in terms of this debate. Some are merely retrospective; particularly the books by Todorov, now translated, are all solid, well-informed, well thought-out and well-argued historical research and criticism.[1]

Criticism in the University (Northwestern University Press, 1985) is a miscellany edited by Gerald Graff and Reginald Gibbons, which

1. *Symbolism and Interpretation.* Cornell University Press, 1982; *Theories of the Symbol.* Cornell University Press, 1982; and *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principal.* University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

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raises most of the burning questions of the moment. The contributors have too divergent points of view to be reduced to a common denominator, but most of them are worried that theory has taken over and that a contact with texts has been lost more and more. The engaging reminiscence by the Amherst professor William H. Pritchard would relegate theory to another department, presumably philosophy, as he is interested in criticism in the old sense of comparative placing and judging. He sympathizes with F.R. Leavis's conception of English studies. Donald Davie has similar views, recognizing the energy and intelligence of the new theorists, but missing literary sensibility. He goes so far as to say that "criticism as an institution does not and never did exist. There exist here and there critics worth listening to." Wallace Douglas, in an essay entitled "Accidental Institution" on the origin of modern language study, traces this institutionalizing of literary studies very instructively, but these studies were then largely philological and historical and merely opened the way to the entry of criticism into the academy. He does not describe this process, which is not merely the achievement of the New Critics. They were preceded by Irving Babbitt and his followers, such as Norman Foerster, who in the late thirties encountered fierce resistance to his introduction of criticism at the University of Iowa. Simultaneously with the New Critics, the Chicago Aristotelians established their local school of criticism, often in sharp polemics with the New Critics. The only critics outside the academy were the Marxists, and even these recently have been more and more incorporated in it. Professors with excellent academic qualifications now teach Marxism in the universities, sometimes rather of the type advocated by Adorno and Habermas. Still, they engage in a revolutionary rhetoric, though it is hard to see what in practice they would achieve besides the conversion of a few students and colleagues. One understands that Terry Eagleton, a fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, whose *Literary Theory* and new short book, *The Function of Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1984) are straight Marxist propaganda, can speak of our "liberation." He hopes for the departure of Mrs. Thatcher, but when his American counterparts use the same revolutionary rhetoric, one wonders where possibly could be the political forces in this country to achieve this liberation. Much of this has been discussed with striking quotations in a recent article by Peter Shaw, "The Politics of Deconstruction," in *Partisan Review* (Vol. LIII, no. 2, 1986).

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William E. Cain's "English in America Reconsidered" discusses Richard Ohmann's *English in America* (1976) with some sympathy, though he doubts whether "to teach politically with revolution as an end" is a practical advise and whether Marxism is not rather "a refuge for academics who seek reassurance about their social conscience and commitment." He is not worried about deconstruction, though it seemed "on the verge of overrunning the discipline." He sees it rather as a harmless consequence of the New Criticism, a rhetorical exercise in discovering ambiguities, aporias, undecidables, quoting some reassuring words of J. Hillis Miller, accepting the canon of English literature. Mr. Cain does not see the deep self-confessed nihilism of the theory, the absurdities of its main doctrines: the denial of the author, which goes back to Roland Barthes; the denial of the coherence of a work of art in favor of textuality; the denial of the possibility of correct interpretation; the denial of any distinction between art and nonart, and thus the very possibility of evaluation. It means not the deconstruction but the destruction of literary studies. The derivation from the New Critics, while historically correct, should not, however, conceal the complete divergence of their aims. The ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies of the New Critics were to elucidate a work of art, enhance our understanding of it, while "deconstruction" means dismantling, revealing the irreconcilable contradictions in every text, a monotonous conclusion, which one would hope would soon bore students and, thus, may today scare many away from literary studies. Why should anyone wish to spend his life in such a negative activity? One must grant that even the most orthodox practitioners, the late Paul de Man and J. Hillis Miller, constantly contradict their theories. They do in fact treat authors and individual works of art, and Hillis Miller has actually proclaimed his acceptance of the canon of English literature. He does often protest against wrong readings by others and is convinced that his own are right. Also Gerald Graff, who condemns "the fetish of textual disunity and aporias," draws a rather bland picture of the academic situation: "The very function of a university department, one might say, is to keep professors isolated and thus incapable of coming into conflict." The university even "fails to make this conflict visible to its public and even to its own faculty." He concludes that we can expect literary theory to be diffused "not by being repressed, but by being accepted and relegated to the margin where it will cease to be a bother." It will be a new ghetto alongside black and women's studies.

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This is not a cheerful prospect if one cares for the life of the mind, but it is, I'm afraid, plausible, and surely Graff and other contributors are right that the divorce between the actual literature now being written in America and the academic criticism could not be more complete. The pretense of some critics to create works of art equal or even superior to those usually classed as "literature" seems defensible until one reads *Glas*, a pitiful hybrid of puns and speculations juxtaposing Hegel and Genêt. *Criticism in the University* has much more to say on many topics. It gives a valuable conspectus of the present moment.

Somewhat surprisingly, the issues raised by deconstruction arise also in historical contexts. *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*[2] contains the striking debate between J. Hillis Miller and M.H. Abrams, besides other pieces of no immediate relevance. Northrop Frye's "The Survival of Eros in Poetry" is an anthology of English love poetry from Thomas Campion's "There Is a Garden in Her Face" to the present. The following question and answer period allows Frye to assert his own Christianity and to reassert his theory of poetry, which he calls criticism: "I dislike the notion of shifting the center of the study of literature from literature to something else." To force upon criticism social concerns seems to him "practically a definition of bad criticism." Mr. Frye repeats his own view that value judgement is no part of literary criticism, though he modifies it slightly, admitting that "value judgements are an expression of certain social attitudes" and thus are subject to change. Frye also defends the view that great art can arise in any kind of mind, for instance, Céline, who was "a Fascist and an anti-Semite and generally a most reprehensible person," but was still a great novelist.

J. Hillis Miller's "On Edge: the Crossways of Contemporary Criticism" appeared, until now, only in the *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* in 1979, and thus a reprint is most welcome. Miller interprets Wordsworth's Lucy poem, "A slumber did my spirit steal," reading it at first quite normally, and then encouraged by the liberty of interpretation preached by him and his followers, spends many pages constructing an obscure sexual drama. We can only marvel at reading that "to be touched by 'earthly years'

2. *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism.* ed. by Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer. Cornell University Press, 1986.

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is a way to be sexually penetrated by still remaining virgin." The whole later interpretation of the poem is a tissue of sheer fantasy of farfetched analogies and metaphors with not a grain of evidence in the text to substantiate them, though Miller, in the question and answer period, grants that a poem has a "coercive effect on any reader and any reading" and that "I can't make George Eliot's *Middlemarch* or Stevens's 'On the Rock' mean anything that I want it to mean." Abrams, in the following essay, "Construing and Deconstructing," comes to a mildly-phrased conclusion: "I can't say I've learned anything I consider valid about the meaning of Wordsworth's poem." Abrams examines deconstruction dispassionately apart from the discussion of the Wordsworth to conclude that "deconstructive readings may become a display of modish terminology, which never engages with anything recognizable as a work of literature." Abrams, in his usual conciliatory way, makes many concessions to the ingenuity and learning of the deconstructionists. Finally, however, he alludes to their fatal flaw: "Literature has survived over the millennia by being read as a presentation of human character and matters of human interest, delight and concern. It is far from obvious that the values in such a reading can for long be replaced by the value, however appealing in its initial novelty, of reading literature as the tropological vehicle for a set of conundrums without solutions." Particularly the absurdity of denying any relation of literature to reality and thus any human and social meaning seems to me so obvious that the appeal of deconstruction becomes simply incomprehensible.

The posthumous collection of de Man's essays, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (Columbia University Press, 1984), ("romanticism" used very loosely to include Yeats), prints some of de Man's earliest essays (1962 seems the first) and a large part of his 1960 Harvard dissertation on Yeats. It also contains two hitherto unpublished essays, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric" and one on Kleist's strange dialogue on the puppet theater. The earlier writings are straightforward close readings, very much in the wake of the New Criticism, which he studied under Reuben Brower at Harvard. Still there are some anticipations of his later, deeply skeptical view of the power of language, even in the first essay "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image." For example, his comment, "The word is always a free presence to the mind, the means by which the permanence of natural entities can be put into question and thus negated, time and again, in the endlessly widening spiral of the dialectic," sounds almost like Derrida.

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The last essay, subtle and learned as it is, forces the text into an allegorical model. The story becomes the "trap of an aesthetic education, which inevitably confuses dismemberment of language by the power of the letter with the gracefulness of a dance." I am also disconcerted by de Man's flight of fancy with no basis in the text, when he speaks of the "white, colorless world of statues suddenly reddened by a flow of blood." He has become extremely finespun in his argumentation and given to dogmatic assertions, which strongly condemn other people's misreadings, though in the theories of the deconstructionists, there cannot be any standard of correct interpretations.

Paul Bové's *Intellectuals in Power* (Columbia University Press, 1986) is a strange, ambiguous book which argues that a "new criticism can wrest the knowledge-producing apparatus away from the interests it now serves." Edward Said and Michel Foucault are Bové's heroes. I. A. Richards and Erich Auerbach are presented as exponents of an heroic humanism which fights a rearguard battle, trying to recenter authority in an elite of "mandarin" professors. Oddly enough, Bové admires both Richards and Auerbach greatly, distorting, however, their points of view grotesquely. He speaks of Richard's "monumental and antiquarian historicism," though everybody should remember that Richards, when coming to Cambridge to study history, said, "I didn't think history ought to have happened." Richards is the most antihistorical critic one can imagine. Auerbach is distorted by making him an intellectual of great power, a sublime, heroic figure who has become a master of American criticism, though, as I can testify from personal acquaintance, Auerbach was a most modest academic specialist, completely absorbed in his medieval studies, with no political pretensions or even views. Naturally, as a refugee from the Nazis he shared in general antifascism and the pessimism about the fate of Western civilization, which was common in Germany. After all, *Mimesis* was written during the darkest years of the war. There is no evidence that Auerbach wanted to recenter authority in intellectuals or that he had any important impact on American criticism. Where is a book which would show the influence of *Mimesis*, except possibly Thomas M. Greene's *Descent from Heaven*? The main argument asks us critical intellectuals to work against an "essentially imperial and oppressive hegemony" and to overcome the "unavoidable complicity of historical humanism in fascism and the other Western barbarisms of the twentieth century."

It seems a strange situation that puts American intellectuals into

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the role of subversives or at least revolutionaries without, however, ever defining clearly what the present system would be replaced with. It must be obvious that all this talk about liberation and destroying hegemony is totally theoretical. There is no basis in society for this assumed revolution, and in practice it all favors only Marxism and the Soviet Union, as no other alternative is offered.

Stanley Corngold's *The Fate of the Self* (Columbia University Press, 1986) is a most ambitious, sophisticated and learned attempt to defend the concept of the self against the arguments for the loss of the self of Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger. Stanley Corngold argues that these writers did not encourage the sort of divestiture of the self, but actually uses them for evidence of the self which is not, he emphasizes, a mere metaphor or fiction. Literature, and particularly German literature, becomes for him the main source for evidence of the self. He argues at length that it is not from the conflict between self and society, but rather from a sense of "an original estrangement that the German soul draws its sense of life." The book has chapters on Hölderlin, Dilthey's poetics of force, the self and subject in Nietzsche, Thomas Mann as a reader of Nietzsche, Kafka's narrative perspective, Freud as literature, and Heidegger's *Being and Time* and its implications for poetics. In this context it is impossible to give an adequate idea of this learned and subtle book which, rather oddly, has the subtitle "German Writers and French Theory," though French theory comes in only via references to Lacan and Derrida and strangely deferential discussions of some French articles on Hölderlin.

Geoffrey H. Hartman's *Easy Pieces* (Columbia University Press, 1985) is a collection of miscellaneous essays, many of which have nothing to do with criticism, but concern film and psychoanalysis. The two pieces on contemporary criticism, "Wild, Fierce Yale" and "Reconnoitering Chaos: A Statement on Contemporary Criticism," are defenses of deconstructionism as a "movement necessary for the survival of literary studies" as it has a "recuperative and truly conservative strength." Mr. Hartman has good things to say for deconstruction as a rhetorical technique which finds everywhere undecidables and embraces the argument that there is no distinction between an artistic text and any other, in order to plead for an equality of criticism and literary creation. While one may grant him these virtues of deconstructionism, he does not at all counter the main objections, not against the creative element in criticism, but against the destructive theories about the death of the author, the complete denial of any correctness of interpretation, and the ex-

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travagant refusal to face the problems of the relationship of literature to reality. He does not see the view that thereby the study of literature is deprived of all social and human meaning and reduced to a playful theory of language, an impoverishment literary studies would pay for bitterly.

The Ear of the Other. Otobiography, Transference, Translation (Schocken Books, 1985) is the translation of the discussions held at the University of Montreal in 1979 between Derrida and a number of colleagues in Montreal. It is astonishingly lucid in defiance of Derrida's own statement that lucidity is the proof of shallowness. Derrida jokes again about his name, which is now supposed to mean "derrière de la rideau." He is surprised about the success of the term "deconstruction." "I love," he says, "everything that I deconstruct in my own manner," but at other moments in the discussion, he seems to retreat from deconstruction almost completely as a doctrine. Some interest is in the defense of Nietzsche's early reflections on education, which have been exploited by friends and foes, because Nietzsche speaks about "Führer," "obedience," "subordination," "discipline," and "subjection." Much of the book is given to the commentators who finally are so loquacious that the whole thing trails off into irrelevant, totally marginal and sometimes very obvious reflections on translation and autobiography.

In quite different books, *Motives for Fiction* (Harvard University Press, 1984) by Robert Alter and *Habitations of the Word* (Simon and Schuster, 1985), essays by William H. Gass, the topic of representation and the war for reality is discussed very differently, but with the same conclusion. Mr. Gass's essay is a virtuoso display of concrete imagery listing "mind, matter and metaphor" as the instruments in the war to reach reality. The novel is, he argues, the most successful genre. In Robert Alter's *Motives for Fiction*, another recent collection of miscellaneous essays ranging through several literatures with ease and confidence, "Mimesis and the Motives of Fiction" argues against the view that novels are just "signs to be interpreted." He says "it is just not true that a lover's intimate caress is every bit as semiotic as a traffic light or even an image in a sonnet of Baudelaire." He considers this the linguistic fallacy and is rightly shocked by a friend saying that "your assessment of novels is based on *experience* and we have demonstrated that there is no such thing." "We run into the danger of being directed by the theorists to read in a way that real readers on land or sea have never read." Mr. Alter, however, is very acutely aware of fiction which can be called self-reflective, the devices of fiction which

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are conventions, genre traditions, chance events, obvious in the novels of Nabokov, to whom he devotes several perceptive essays. Even *Ada*, surely a highly contrived nonrealistic novel, is seen as a serious "ontological enterprise to rescue reality from the bland nonentity of stereotypicality." The deconstructors cannot get around the inevitable fact that literature speaks about the world outside; it is not merely a linguistic game. In a splendid essay on *Tristram Shandy*, which was singled out by the Russian Formalists as the model of novels about novel-writing, Alter shows convincingly that for all of Sterne's wit and artifice, for all the parody and puns, Sterne presents a small world of human beings motivated by sexual passion. I am wondering why A. D. Nutall's *A New Mimesis. Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality* is not being cited in this context. It is an elaborate, well-written and well-argued essay, showing that Shakespeare, in spite of all stage convention and artifices, gives us a picture of his age where we can even clearly distinguish the different decades in it.

One of the texts most admired and constantly appealed to by the currently fashionable critics is Roland Barthes's essay on the death of the author. Gass and Alter both reject this announcement of Barthes's, which Gass rightly considers rather a wish: "The removal of the author is a social and political and psychological gesture and not an aesthetic one." The anonymity Barthes asks for may mean many things, and Gass is good in thinking of all the possibilities, but concludes quite rightly that it cannot possibly mean that no one did it. Alter's *Motives for Fiction* also has an essay on "Literary Lives," praising such recent biographies as Walter Jackson Bates's *Samuel Johnson*, Phyllis Rose's *Virginia Woolf* and Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky*, which are all clearly aware of the difference between work and life and reject the simpleminded views which derive the work from life. But Alter argues that good literary biographies have crossed the hiatus between life and work with a strong "intuition of the human subject's distinctive presence."

I wonder whether the assault on the very existence of self can be taken seriously. We may know Hume's *Treatise*, which I believe argued for the incoherence and discontinuity of our mental life for the first time, but we will know that Hume's good judgement allowed him to continue speaking about the self and feel the continuity of his own self from the earliest childhood. There may be all kinds of arguments for playing down the role of the author in literature. John Crowe

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Ransom has discussed *Lycidas* as a poem "nearly anonymous." The Russian Formalists believed in almost automatic evolution of literature. Osip Brik, one hopes with tongue in cheek, said *Eugene Onegin* would have been written if Pushkin had never lived. But finally we must admit that somebody wrote it.

The same is true of the other paradoxes of the poststructuralists. When they say that there is no such thing as a unified, organic work of art and defend works of completely loose structure with no beginning and end, they may have a point, but actually even the most incoherent piece of writing, which has no beginning in the sense of a temporal starting point and no end as a temporal closure, has as a text to start somewhere and end sometime. It is finally some kind of observable entity with blank pages before and blank pages behind.

If the New Critics say that there is no correct interpretation, that they have complete liberty of reading into a text whatever they please, they have to limit this liberty themselves. You cannot interpret, say, Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as if you were reading *Silas Marner.* There are obviously wrong interpretations. Hamlet is not a woman in disguise or King James I, as it has been argued in lengthy books. One can refute wrong interpretations, even such widely accepted ones as D. H. Lawrence's misreading of the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov.* He thinks that Christ gets up and kisses the Inquisitor saying: "Thank you, thank you, you're right, old man," but surely Jesus Christ does not accept the arguments of the Inquisitor. He answers them in the only way that religion can answer atheism, by silence and forgiveness. The Inquisitor is refuted by the kiss: Alyosha immediately afterwards kisses Ivan, rejecting his atheism, answering his revolt with Christian love. Ivan knows this, when he says, "That's plagiarism, you stole it from my poem." The rest of the novel testifies as well as Dostoevsky's other writings, fictional and journalistic, to the correctness of this interpretation and the wrongheadedness of Lawrence's, which surprisingly has been echoed widely.

Nor is the denial of any difference between art and nonart convincing. We may again grant that it is difficult to draw the line. There are borderline cases, but one cannot deny the difference, say, between the sublimity and grandeur of the *Divine Comedy* and a trashy poem in a newspaper. Those who deny the necessity or possibility of value judgements always avoid these choices and discuss disputable cases, but we do judge, merely by selecting a specific text or *œuvre* for discussion. We might, in some context, want to examine comic strips,

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pornography, mysteries, romances, science fiction, the whole array on the racks of a drugstore, and we might very well be able to discriminate even among the trashiest productions, but we will not overturn the hierarchy. Leslie Fiedler in *What Was Literature?* tried to exalt *Gone With the Wind*, the Leather-Stocking Tales, etcetera, and to depreciate T. S. Eliot, Joyce and other modernists, confessing his own hypocrisy in formally admiring them, but even he can only argue for good yarn-spinning, story-telling, which has its aesthetic value, but not for the complete abolition of the distinction between genuine literature and real trash. The paradoxes of deconstructionism must ultimately fail as they come up against the wall of facts. There is an author, there is a work of art, distinguishable from trash, there is a correct and plausible interpretation, there is a literature with an inevitable relation to reality, as otherwise literature would only be a language game. Literature tells us about man, nature, society and the meaning of life. It has a cognitive, social, and ethical function.

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"STAR WARS": THE POLITICS OF DEFENSE

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: Dan Rose, who's your cohost tonight, has been very active in the political and cultural life of this country and has had a lot to do with *Partisan Review*. He will be our moderator.
DANIEL ROSE: Thank you, William. Ladies and gentlemen, this discussion really is an exploration of what has been a basic question thoughtful people have been struggling with since the beginning of the atomic era. It really is a question of weighing the relative risks of arms control negotiations against the relative risks of arms races, defenses, and so forth. No thoughtful person will deny that either position involves very real risks. The specific question we're discussing, if you like it it's the "Strategic Defense Initiative," if you don't like it it's "Star Wars." The question is complex. It really breaks down into four separate areas: technological, strategic, political, and economic. Tonight, we have two discussants on the subject: each of them will make an opening presentation of five to ten minutes, and since this is a discussion rather than a debate, we will take questions from the floor. Our first discussant, Dr. George Chapline, is a theoretical physicist. He's head of a special experimental projects group at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and inventor of the x-ray laser.
GEORGE CHAPLINE: When I first heard the president's speech about "Star Wars," I thought it was an interesting idea, but it wasn't clear to me immediately whether it was a good idea. I thought the technical aspects of strategic defense were quite fascinating, and I was, myself, more than willing to think about these technical questions. But I must say that for a long time, it mattered to me whether —if you could build a strategic defense system—it really was a good idea. Even if it were possible, let's say, to defend the country against ballistic missiles—and I would like to suggest, incidentally, that I would define the Strategic Defense Initiative narrowly as a program to develop a defense against ballistic missiles *per se*—I think that the president's hope of making nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete is much too optimistic, in the sense that it may be virtually impossible to negate any possible means of delivering nuclear weapons. But I think that if one could learn to defeat ballistic missiles, that alone would be a significant accomplishment. However, as I said, the ques-

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Editor's Note: This discussion took place in New York City on May 6th, 1986.

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tion was still: would it be a good idea? I'm now of the opinion that it would be a good idea. The best argument against the Strategic Defense Initiative, is that this "policy of mutual assured destruction" has kept the peace, or at least prevented global nuclear war for several decades. But things are happening that are very disquieting and that the United States should respond to. The first is the tremendous expansion of the Russian offensive nuclear forces, particularly for a first strike. The second is the Russian violations of arms control agreements. They blatantly violated the ABM treaty by building an ABM Radar at Krasnoyarsk. And although the critics of American policies apologize it away, it's quite clear that it was built for an eventual, comprehensive ballistic missile defense system. They've violated the SALT II agreements by developing two new types of mobile missiles, and, incidentally, they violated agreements which they never had any intention of obeying: the Helsinki Human Rights Accord and the treaty to ban biological weapons. One might say the significance of any or all of these things is not very great and we shouldn't necessarily respond to them. However, one of the most important points one should keep in mind is that—and one reason that's absolutely clear to me why Strategic Defense Initiative is a good idea—is that we could never reduce our offensive forces significantly, at least in the context of the present political atmosphere, without fearing that the Soviet Union was going to escalate precipitously. Technically, as you reduce the strength of offensive nuclear forces, the effectiveness of the leverage of defensive systems increases dramatically. So, I would say it's not a question of arms control *versus* strategic defense, I would say that one cannot have arms control without strategic defense. And on that point I agree completely with the positions of Secretary of State Shultz and the administration. The third reason, in my mind, for thinking that SDI is a good idea, is that the concept of mutual assured destruction is not a very clear concept. We don't clearly understand what motivates the Soviet leadership, what their policy is, and what things they value. Therefore one can't be sure that we are designing a military response which will deter them, particularly when we keep in mind that it's always possible that someone can come to power in the Soviet Union who is mad. And, I think that for all these reasons, the Strategic Defense Initiative itself is a very proper, and, to my mind, a timely political response to the Soviet Union. I'll leave the question of technological feasibility for the discussion.

DANIEL ROSE: Thank you. Mr. John Pike is Associate Director

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of Space Policy for the Federation of American Scientists, in Washington, D.C.

JOHN PIKE: The question that most people usually ask about Strategic Defense Initiative is, "Will it work?" And that question can be asked in at least three different ways. You can ask, "Will it work at the gadget level? Can we build the individual devices that will go into a ballistic missile defense system?" You can ask, "Will it work as a system? Can we tie all of those gadgets together into a system that will cohere, and can we make that system function in the face of what the Soviets might do to degrade the effectiveness of the system." And you can ask, "Will it work as a strategy, as a national security policy, that makes sense militarily, and whether the advantages of pursuing this policy outweigh the disadvantages and problems of pursuing the policy." One of the problems in the debate over the SDI is that there has been a tendency to equate workability at the gadget level with workability as a strategy, to assume that if we demonstrate a rocket that can intercept a warhead, or a laser that can shoot down a missile, then Star Wars must necessarily be a good national security policy.

Will it work at the gadget level? Probably yes. A lot of gadgets that have been debated over the last three years probably won't work, probably don't make a great deal of sense. There's increasing convergence between the SDI organization and the critics, that many of the technologies we criticized early on don't look very attractive. You used to hear a lot of talk about chemical lasers in space, or rail-guns or imaging sensors, and you no longer hear very much about them because the technical deficiencies the critics identified two and a half years ago in recent months have been acknowledged by SDI. It's also important to recognize that at the gadget level, there aren't any miracle weapons. They obey the laws of physics, and these impose some limitations on what the weapons can and cannot do. For instance, many of these weapons perform fairly well in the vacuum of space, but when they run into the atmosphere, they don't do so well. And finally, when you're talking about a gadget that today is sort of in the advanced-artist-concept stage, today's estimations about how long it's going to take to build the first one, how much it's going to cost, and how well it's going to work are understandably optimistic, because these things always take longer, cost more, and don't work quite as well as the designer promised. But, I would stipulate that the gadgets that would go into the SDI probably can be built. I think it's clear we can hit a bullet with a bullet. The real question about Star Wars, though, is not hitting a bullet with a bullet, it's stopping a

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shotgun blast with a shotgun blast. Because the problem is not intercepting a single warhead, the problem is intercepting hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of warheads. And that leads to the question of whether it will work as a system. It seems that there are two different issues here. One of them is—can all of the gadgets be brought together, in a coordinated fashion? And the second is, how will the system respond to Soviet countermeasures? The most difficult part of bringing all of these gadgets together into a workable system is writing the computer software program that will coordinate all these things. Estimates are that that software would probably require between ten and thirty million lines of code—two hundred thousand odd pages of computer code, that is, two hundred thousand pages without a single misspelled word, without a single comma out of place. I think everybody recognizes that that's not going to happen. Well, you can get around that problem by writing it, putting it on the computer, and then testing the system. But if you have a single computer running the entire system, the only way you can effectively test it is by simulating World War III, full scale—throw thousands of rockets at it, and so forth. And since the software would perform in different ways depending upon how you simulate it, you'd probably have to simulate World War III, say, every afternoon over a period of several years. The alternative is to have a decentralized system with lots of little computers running small pieces of the puzzle. The problem you get there is that the system is no longer coordinated. The battle that's being fought in one area is not going to have much impact or influence on the way the battle is being fought in another area. Warheads can get through one part of the system and be ignored by the next part of the system. You can compensate for that by adding more of everything, but then the system becomes increasingly expensive. And the Soviets are not going to be cooperating with us. There are a number of things they can do to reduce the effectiveness of the system. The most obvious one would be to proliferate their offensive forces. The SDI organization's own estimates suggest that a very probable Soviet response to the SDI would be to increase their existing seven and a half thousand warheads on ballistic missiles to as many as forty thousand by the end of the century. The Soviets could further complicate the life of the SDI planners by throwing in a lot of decoy warheads which the system also would have to deal with. Originally the SDI had estimated that the Soviets might employ about 300,000 decoy warheads—now the estimates are closer to five million. And finally, the Soviets could directly attack the system. Space-based

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weapons that could intercept ballistic missiles would be equally capable of intercepting other space-based weapons. Our space-based weapons floating a few hundred miles over the Soviet Union will clearly be vulnerable to all types of weapons on the ground. In a very real sense, the question of whether these space lasers, or whatever, were offensive or defensive weapons could in large measure depend just on who shot first, that is, taking the offensive with the laser, shooting the other person's laser defenses into smithereens. With the possible exception of the commander in chief himself, no one is talking any more about a perfect defense. That leads to the third question: "Will it work as a strategy?" Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger says that there are basically two types of ballistic missile defense systems—those that are desirable but not feasible, and those that are feasible but not desirable. I place Mr. Reagan's vision of the perfect astrodome defense in the category of desirable but not feasible. When the president speaks he is selling the American public the notion that if World War III happened we could all take our lawn furniture into the backyard, open a can of beer or pour some lemonade, and watch a laser light show for about five minutes, and that no warheads would land and everybody would be okay. The real question is, "Are less than perfect defense systems desirable?" I don't think so. You can limit damage to the United States with these less-than-perfect defense systems, but you couldn't deny such damage. And by limiting it you start to ask what is an acceptable level of damage. Are twenty million dead an acceptable outcome? Would our ability to limit American casualties to, say, twenty million influence our political behavior in crises or in peacetime? What possible political goal would be worth risking twenty million dead Americans? And would we be able to limit the damage to only twenty million deaths? We could defend our retaliatory forces, we could close the window of vulnerability. A lot of us really weren't very concerned about the window of vulnerability to begin with because about eighty percent of our strategic forces are deployed on submarines and bombers and aren't vulnerable to Soviet counterforce. For those people who were worried about the window of vulnerability, the president's own Scowcroft Commission a couple of years ago recommended deployment of the Midgetman Mobile ICBM. Midgetman would be deployed in 1992, at a total cost—over fifteen years—of about forty billion dollars. The SDI would not be able to produce an actual operational weapon until 1995, with simply a development cost of seventy-five billion dollars and additional tens or hundreds of billions on top of that to deploy

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the system. So if you're interested in closing the window of vulnerability, clearly Midgetman would be the weapon of choice. Well, we could use ballistic missile defenses to defend against a terrorist attack. But I have difficulty imagining that a terrorist would try to deliver his one nuclear weapon in the one way that we could deal with it. It's far more likely that they'd wrap the hydrogen bomb in a bale of marijuana and fly it across the Mexican border. We could guard against an accidental launch, but we could do that equally well by rewiring a few of our Minuteman II ICBMs to intercept the occasional stray missile. We really haven't had very many stray missiles flying around in the last forty years. Less-than-perfect defenses are going to fuel the offensive arms races as both sides add more offensive weapons to keep those defenses from becoming effective. They're going to make arms control impossible, because in that type of environment what is there to agree on, except the fact that both sides are going to be building as fast as they can? It would increase the risk of nuclear war, because leaky defenses are going to be much more effective in defending against small retaliatory attacks than against massive first strikes. Both sides then would recognize that they would have a great deal of incentive to strike first in a time of crisis, and so both would be very concerned that they'd get in the first blow. These weapons are going to be extremely expensive: tens of billions of dollars to develop, hundreds of billions of dollars to deploy. And it's ironic that some of the most promising and certainly some of the most intriguing weapons that are being developed to make nuclear weapons go away are in fact nuclear weapons themselves. And George has, I must say in all candor, done some very excellent work in developing these systems. Thank you.

DANIEL ROSE: Thank you. One of the problems of this subject, for the general public—even for informed lay people—is that, unlike our discussants tonight who are moderate and reasonable individuals, the issue is normally discussed in rather simplistic terms with gross exaggerations on both sides. President Reagan is the easiest target, not only in his hyperbole of perfection, but also in such off-the-top-of-the-head ideas as offering to share the technology. Since the technology is going to be in the computers, not in the throw material, and the computers have applications that go so vastly beyond it, no one is going to want to share those things. On the other hand, in the real world, we have to face the fact that there is no sharp line between the technology for antiballistic missiles and for antisatellite missiles, and that the Russians are doing active research in those fields. This

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is not a one-man race, this is a two-man race. It is not productive to ask whether we go whole hog and have everything, which we realistically can't afford and which isn't perfect, or whether we turn our backs on the whole subject, which also doesn't seem feasible given the real world. Let me ask each of our discussants if they can approach it from the standpoint of what in their views are the feasible realistic first-step procedures we should be exploring with a view toward achieving the goal—the goal is safety, the goal is some kind of international accommodation, the goal is not to win, but to keep from losing. Would this be a fruitful line of discussion?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: You can discuss the perhaps too narrow question from the point of view of whether a defense against ballistic missiles is possible or not, and for that narrow question the Strategic Defense Initiative *is* pursuing some promising technological avenues. The first thing I would say that can be done realistically is to develop target tracking and acquisition systems for ballistic missiles. Those are satellite-based systems that can look and see ballistic missiles during their boost phase. There's actually a pinpoint where the rocket sees the post-boost vehicles, that is, the buses that come off the booster rocket before the warheads are deployed. And, then, to develop systems which will try to pick out the warheads from the enormous number of decoys that Mr. Pike alluded to. I'd say that we're far along on developing feasible technologies for locating booster rockets and post-boost vehicles. The problem of picking out the warhead from the decoys is enormously difficult and a number of ideas are being discussed, but in my view we're a long way from a good solution to that problem. The best hope for SDI now lies with the ground-based free-electron laser. There's absolutely no doubt that lasers of sufficient power and brightness can be built within about ten years which will be capable of reaching the Soviet rockets during boost phase. The main problems with that in my opinion have to do with the vulnerability and cost of the mirrors. I might mention, parenthetically, that the SDI response to this is not to try and protect the mirrors so much as to try to hide them. The whole question of vulnerability of space assets of course is something which the critics have quite rightfully emphasized, and is a serious problem, but on the other hand, a little reflection shows that you can't destroy something unless you can find it. There is the opportunity the SDI sees for space-based defense systems. The second possibility for effectively directed energy weapons is the x-ray laser. But it's not at all clear

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whether one can actually build x-ray laser weapons of sufficient brightness to be useful against missiles in their boost phase, although it's probably good that you can build x-ray laser weapons that will be useful against ballistic missiles in their terminal or maybe even mid-course phase. But the main purpose, of the SDI program, at the present time, is to work on these three areas. It also has given increased attention to software. I would just say, in rebuttal to what Mr. Pike said, that although I'm not an expert on computer software, I don't find the claim that you can't build reliable software for strategic defense convincing. There are people, whose opinion I would trust, who believe that it certainly can be done. A person like Solomon Buchsbaum, who is vice president of Bell Telephone Laboratories, as you can well imagine, has been very much concerned with the question of building large complex systems run by computers. And it is a fact, incidentally, that the AT&T electronic switching system has more than ten million lines of software coding. And it's a fact that it worked almost perfectly from the instant it was turned on.

DANIEL ROSE: Can I ask for clarification, if you were speaking, George, in favor of research, or design, or deployment?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: I feel strongly about the research, because of the possibility that we might indeed develop an essentially perfect defense against ballistic missiles. I don't agree that that's not at all realistic, not part of the world of practical possibilities in the next couple of decades. Technology has accomplished marvelous things. It's a matter of orders of magnitude. No one can predict to how many orders of magnitude technology in any given direction will move. One of my favorite examples is that in 1937 Hans Bethe published an article in *The Physical Review*, a scientific journal for physicists, purporting to prove that cyclotrons would never produce protons with energy more than eight MeV. Well, as you know, now they're talking about building particle accelerators with energies of twenty trillion electron volts—a mere fifty years later. The point is that historically there's just been case after case after case that demonstrates that no one knows even to orders of magnitude how far you can push technology in any given direction.

DANIEL ROSE: But are you speaking of research at this stage?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: I'm saying that one of the motivations for the research is the possibility that somewhere down the road there may indeed be an essentially perfect defense against ballistic missiles. I think there are immediate political reasons for the research pro-

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gram. Over and beyond what may be down the road over the next twenty or thirty, or maybe fifty years, there are immediate political benefits from this research program.

DANIEL ROSE: Would you like to respond, Mr. Pike? Assuming for the moment that the discussion is not about deployment; the discussion is about the research, which incidentally, as best we can tell, the Soviet Union is actively engaged in.

JOHN PIKE: There are three different levels of activity that are prospectively under discussion here. One of them is a research program, and the other end of the continuum is a program of deployment, and between them is development and testing. Research, normally, consists of people in white lab coats in laboratories with oscilloscopes and test tubes and that sort of thing. Deployment is obviously to have thousands of rockets out in the field. Development is the process whereby you move from research to deployment. The thing that is novel about the president's program, the thing that is costing so much money, that is going to get us into trouble with the ABM treaty in a couple of years, that is so different about what we have been doing for the last three years as opposed to what we were doing prior to the time, is that we have moved from simply a research program into a development program. Now clearly if you think that we ought to deploy defenses, then we ought to start developing. On the other hand, if you haven't been able to figure out what the political utility would be of deploying a defense, then clearly there isn't much point in developing that defense. Regardless of what you think of the political utility of deployment or development, I think the case for doing research is a very cogent one. When skeptics of the SDI stand up and say, "This is a countermeasure we think would be effective against some proposed weapon," that usually is the result of research that has actually been done. You have some hard technical data to draw on. We need to do research to find what is not feasible, and what also is not feasible for the Soviets. We also need to do research to find out what we do need to worry about, so that we can design countermeasures to what the Soviets ought to be doing. Fortunately, the SDI budget is neatly divided into the research and the development part of the budget. They've asked for 4.8 billion dollars this year, of which two billion is for research, 2.8 billion for development —I would say give them the two billion dollar research budget, but not the development budget.

DANIEL ROSE: Thank you. Now we'll throw the subject open to discussion from the floor.

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WASSILY LEONTIEF: I'm an economist. I study armaments from the economic point of view—who spends what and on what basis. There was an article published recently in *Science* Magazine, in which two physicists try to analyze the cost of producing and maintaining this type of defense, for us and for the Communists. They specify that it will cost much less to produce missiles, which are destroyed, and replace them, than it will cost to destroy them. So if you spend a hundred million dollars to destroy a missile, you can replace it for 80 million dollars. I am against this Strategic Defense Initiative because it violates President Reagan's criterion that it must be cost-effective. The competition is not simply technological. The competition is between two economies, each with a certain amount of resources, a certain amount of capabilities. The Russian economy at the present time is about half as large as that of the United States. But, according to estimates of the CIA, the Russian growth is a little faster than ours. Its industrial output grew at about 3.6 percent per year; ours at about one half percent. Still it will be a long time before Russian total economic potenial will equal ours. Now, one can defend and justify antiballistic missile defense systems even if they are, according to this definition, not cost-effective, provided the Russians have less resources than we. In other words, let us assume that the real objective of our administration—I don't say it is—is not parity but superiority. In this case the thing to do is outspend the Russians. The situation now is different from that which existed when the idea of assured mutual destruction, which apparently we want, simply dominated the picture. Because if you have only attacking weapons, no defenses, I think you can conclude that both sides can build so many destructive weapons which can destroy each other with a lot to spare, without exhausting their entire resources. Producing ballistic missiles is very cheap. I don't think anybody doubts that the Russians will produce more weapons, and they can produce them like Model A cars. And you can always increase your power. It doesn't matter if it's defensive or offensive, because you can still gain superiority. For example, you can defend yourself but still have a superior attacking force. So there is no limit. It will be the beginning of an infinite race. Since one party, admittedly, has fewer economic resources, a point might come when the weaker party cannot maintain the competition. The Russians will transfer resources from peaceful purposes to military purposes until they can't anymore. In other words, they will tighten the belt. They know very well how to do it. I have not the slightest doubt that on a secret ballot it would have one hundred per-

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cent of the support of the Russian population. I think the Russians will see that they won't be able to go on. What of course they will do is strike. And we will do exactly the same thing. We put this country in a situation where you have a very strong enemy who is trying to reach military superiority, whom you dread incredibly, who, with his military superiority, will just make mincemeat out of you, not only militarily, but nationally, culturally. I think our decisions should not be based on technological guessing: can we make these lasers, or other lasers? Our basic decisions should be based on the longer point of view. Unfortunately we very often lack a "long-run" point of view.

DANIEL ROSE: Thank you.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: Most critics of the SDI program, and critics of our defense program generally, argue that our government is sneaky, that it's really trying to build up superiority rather than parity. I don't see anything wrong with superiority, if superiority provides a better guarantee that there will be no war. I also don't understand the point of the argument that if you won't have a perfect system, that there will always be some vulnerability. It seems to me that Mr. Pike's argument was based to some extent on the assumption that if you're still partly vulnerable, that makes World War III more likely. It seems obvious to me that until such time as we can assure that we have a perfect defense system, we keep up our deterrent. And I don't see why the Russians should be induced, or find it desirable, to carry out a first strike, just because we're not absolutely secure in our defense system, if we still have the deterrence which everybody agrees has been working up to now. I also want to question the point that the Russians can always build more missiles. They can always build more missiles even if we don't have an SDI, and the arms war can still go on whether we have SDI or not. In general, the critics of SDI, including the two we've just heard, argue that the system either can't work technologically, or if it can work technologically it's not politically desirable, or if it's politically desirable, it's not economically feasible, and if it's economically feasible, it's culturally undesirable. If all the objections are valid it is strange that the Russians are working on it. We have to have a theory of the super-stupidity of the Russians. Why are the Japanese, the British, and the French, and the military establishments of various European governments interested in participating in the development of SDI? Do they all want to compete in idiocy with the United States? We're arriving at some theory of total idiocy.

DANIEL ROSE: Before we have our discussants answer any specific

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questions, it might be good to throw other questions into the hopper.
LIONEL ABEL: No, I would like Mr. Pike to answer William Phillips's question right now.
JOHN PIKE: If you could give the questions to me one at a time. I wasn't taking notes. I have excellent answers for all of them. I just need to know which answers I need to give.
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: One question is why is the possibility that we won't have a perfect system an argument against the system so long as we still have deterrence?
JOHN PIKE: That's precisely what the problem is and that's precisely the problem that President Reagan recognized when he made his speech. You recall that among his other comments he pointed out that combinations of offensive and defensive forces could be regarded as being threatening and no one wants that. For if we were to take the existing situation and add leaky defenses to them the incentives for going first, for launching a preemptive attack would be greatly increased.
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: Why? I don't see that.
JOHN PIKE: Because the side that strikes first is going to be able to significantly degrade the effectiveness of the other side's defenses.
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: So why don't the Russians strike right now according to your argument?
LIONEL ABEL: Now we have no defense.
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: You've just demonstrated that it would be a good idea to strike now.
JOHN PIKE: The reason is because the Soviets don't have a defense. The asymmetry is that where you have the types of offensive forces both sides currently have deployed, in conjunction with leaky defenses, there's a great advantage to going first because you can degrade the effectiveness of the other side's defense and you can also significantly degrade the effectiveness of the other side's retaliatory forces, using your own offensive weapons as well as using your own ballistic missiles defense.
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: But you haven't answered my question.
JOHN PIKE: So in a situation where both sides deployed both offensive forces and leaky defenses, if you strike first, you're going to be able to destroy much of his retaliatory forces, using your offensive weapons, and be able to intercept most of his remaining retaliation using your own defensive weapons.
LIONEL ABEL: That's even more true now.
JOHN PIKE: Today, there is absolutely nothing that the Soviet

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Union can do to prevent the United States from destroying the Soviet Union as a society. There is absolutely nothing that the Soviet Union can do to prevent us from killing two hundred and fifty million Russians in fifteen minutes. If a situation existed where both sides deployed both offensive and defensive forces, the side that strikes first can kill two hundred million people, but the side that strikes second might be able to kill twenty million people. And under those circumstances, the incentive for striking first would be quite significant, particularly because the other guy is sitting there thinking the same thing. In a situation where you have offensive forces such as the type we have deployed today, in combination with leaky defenses, the decision as to whether you strike first or strike second is the difference between survival and annihilation.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: And suppose you had no SDI, how does that change things?

JOHN PIKE: There's no incentive to strike first because there's nothing that you can do to prevent the retaliation.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: I don't follow that. One more question that you didn't answer, why are the Russians so stupid, and the Japanese so stupid and everybody else so stupid, that they want to go ahead with the SDI?

WASSILY LEONTIEF: We're paying them hush money to stop them from criticizing us. Prior to the time Secretary Weinberger made this offer of industrial participation, all the allies were extremely skeptical of this.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: How much are we paying the Russians?

DANIEL ROSE: I really feel it's time to throw it open.

JOHN PIKE: Prior to the time that we made the offer all of the allies were extremely critical, because regardless of how well the SDI works to protect North America, it clearly isn't going to work nearly as well to protect Western Europe. It's simply a matter of geography. In protecting North America we can put six or eight layers between us, and the West Germans basically would be able to put up one layer.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: How about the Russians, whom we're not paying?

JOHN PIKE: The Soviets clearly face a very different strategic problem than the United States. A fundamental fact is that every nuclear weapon in the world is either in the Soviet Union or aimed at the Soviet Union. They have to worry about the French, the Chinese, the British. We don't have to worry about the Chinese any-

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more, thanks to Mr. Nixon. The Soviets also have to contend with the fact that virtually everything of value and certainly almost everything of interest in the Soviet Union is in Moscow. Moscow is an extremely attractive target, both for third nuclear forces and for the United States in a decapitating leadership attack.

BARRY BELGOROD: I find the concept of deriding a nuclear defense somewhat contrary to American ethics. In our country we supposedly value human life above all else. It seems to me that if we could save ten percent of the United States population in a nuclear fallout, or nuclear attack, that's something worth doing.

JOHN PIKE: Unfortunately in order to save ten percent of the population you have to have a nuclear war and deploying the defense system makes the war more likely. Over the last twenty years the United States has been faced with a number of different choices about what type of strategic forces we deploy. There's always a tradeoff between the effectiveness of those forces if they are used, and the risk that those weapons pose as to whether or not they will be used. And quite consistently, the American political system has decided that if we are faced with a weapons system that would improve the outcome of a war, at the risk of increasing the risk of the war, that we would not deploy that weapons system. I think that the MX is an excellent example. If we had deployed one hundred MXs, or pick your number, in soft Minuteman silos, that would significantly reduce damage to the United States in the event of World War III. We might be able to reduce American fatalities from 160 million dead to perhaps 120 million dead. On the other hand, because those ICBM silos would be extremely vulnerable in a time of crisis their vulnerability would significantly increase Soviet incentives to preemptively attack those silos to destroy them.

GEORGE CHAPLINE: Mr. Pike made one assumption that I strongly disagree with, that deploying defensive systems will increase the likelihood of nuclear war. As far as I'm aware, no one understands what it is that determines the probability of nuclear war. Hence, it seems to me impossible to determine or to show rigorously that deploying defensive systems will increase the likelihood of nuclear war. I agree that if one side had a defense and the other side didn't, the side that had the defense would have some incentive to strike first. But I know of no rigorous argument that would, in the real world, increase the likelihood of nuclear war.

JOHN PIKE: Fortunately, our database on nuclear wars is quite limited. I'm interested in keeping it that way.

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PETER BLAU: I want to know if you believe that mutual assured destruction on which we based our policy for the last twenty-five years or so was completely crazy, and there was no reason at all to assume as long as there's a balance that this discourages nuclear war. Whereas if we build SDI and if it is successful, or partially successful, then there will be an incentive for a first strike.

GEORGE CHAPLINE: Well it's a historical fact that the policy of the past few decades has in fact been successful. However, the Soviets are doing things which I find uncomfortable. They are continuing to expand and modernize their offensive nuclear forces. They are working, apparently, on a comprehensive antiballistic missile system. And I think we have to respond to that in some effective way.

WASSILY LEONTIEF: Why? Why don't we simply build more missiles?

JOHN PIKE: That's what the Reagan administration has proposed to do.

WASSILY LEONTIEF: It's cheap, we know what it is.

GEORGE CHAPLINE: The mere fact that the policy has been successful does not tell us in absolute terms how close or how far we have ever been to the threshold of nuclear war. And it doesn't insure that for the indefinite future we will never cross that threshold. Now if you continue to increase your offensive missiles on both sides if you ever do cross that threshold, it'll be that much worse. So I think that what we want to strive for is somehow to encourage the Soviet Union to decrease their offensive nuclear forces.

WASSILY LEONTIEF: No. We can saturate both sides in the number of offensive missiles if we don't have defenses. But it will make no sense for anybody to add more. And ultimately we will have a stalemate, when everybody will have quite enough to destroy the other. But it will be a peaceful stalemate and, as the economists say, it will be long before all the economic capabilities of either country, even of the weaker country, are exhausted. So this will still permit peaceful development of both countries. It is entirely different if we have a race which has no end, and defensive missiles will produce unending races.

PETER SHAW: Mr. Pike, you said that there is nothing that can be done at the present time to prevent either the Soviet Union or the United States from killing 250 million people. But I believe that the realistic danger that we face now as a result of the build-up that Mr. Chapline described is not the kind of all-out attack that that presumes. Rather, what is worrisome is the possibility that the

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Soviet Union would be able to destroy the missiles that we have in place on the ground within the United States.

JOHN PIKE: Right.

PETER SHAW: That would then leave us with the retaliation of our sea-based missiles and bombers. And the problem with that is that the sea-based missiles do not have the accuracy of the land-based missiles. Therefore the response that we have at the present time is only to use the sea-based missile to destroy Russian cities in response to an attack that would be a limited attack on our missiles. That puts us in a position of having to make a decision to destroy many people with very little military benefit from it, and it's rather doubtful that we would choose to make that response. Now, what the defensive missiles promise to do for us is to make that attack on the land-based missiles less successful than it now promises to be. If we can do that then we are always in a position, theoretically, to return that first-strike attack with a similar attack on Russian missiles. So that one of the great points of the SDI, of putting in these defenses, is to enable us to have less than a total all-out terror response to a first-strike attack by the Soviets.

JOHN PIKE: You've gotten a couple of arguments a little confused here. One of them is the "window of vulnerability," and the second is the argument that was floating around about ten or twelve years ago which was why we needed improved counterforce capabilities on sea-based forces. And we've got that now in Trident I. Trident I is an extremely discriminating weapon. The argument that you were making about the inability of our sea-based forces to go after anything other than urban-industrial targets was predicated on the notion that the only thing we had deployed was Poseidon which was very explicitly deployed as a countervaluing weapon. Trident I has an accuracy that compares very favorably with Minuteman III, and it's a very discriminating weapon. You're talking about weapons that have inaccuracies that are measured in hundreds of feet and lethal radii that are measured in several miles. The question of whether one more city block or one more parking lot is inside the lethal radius isn't the issue. That might have been an argument that could have been made ten or fifteen years ago when all we had was Polaris or Poseidon. But the notion that the sea-based force is capable only of conducting a city-busting campaign is basically an obsolete argument because that no longer is the strategic characteristic of the forces we have deployed. The reason that one might properly be concerned about the vulnerability of our land-based forces is that

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they have a very specific mission in our over-all strategy. The Single Integrated Operational Plan, the War Plan, has several types of attack. You have the Basic Attack Options at the bottom which are small attacks of dozens or perhaps a few hundred warheads. You have Major Attack Options at the top which are thousands of warheads in an annihilate-the-Soviet-Union campaign. The Basic Attack Options down at the bottom are specifically the sorts of things that you want to use ICBMs for. Basic Attack Options are the fundamental component of our extended deterrence, flexible response strategy. What you're trying to do is use basic American forces, ICBMs particularly, in a discriminating attack against Soviet military assets to try to get them to stop a conventional or tactical nuclear war in Europe. The idea is that you use these forces to go after Soviet airbases, marshalling yards, supply depots, army bases, and that sort of thing. And your ICBM is probably uniquely suited to that mission. Very discriminating and accurate, they can be launched in small numbers. You can't do that with bombers and submarines. You also have extremely good connectivity with the ICBM, because you have land-line communication with it, and unlike the submarines, you know whether the ICBM is still in the silo. So ICBMs are at this point our unique instrument for executing our extended deterrent guarantees to our European allies. And if the Soviets had the capability to destroy our ICBM force, they would be able to knock a number of very important rungs out of current military strategy. This is not to say that today's military strategy is wise. There are very real questions about its credibility, about our first-use doctrine, about deterrence, and nuclear guarantees to the allies. And the concern about ICBM vulnerability is not a concern that we would not be able to effectively retaliate against the Soviet Union, but rather that the Soviets would be able to knock so many rungs out of our escalation ladder, that we would be faced with either executing large attacks (using submarines and bombers), or with backing down.

PETER SHAW: Isn't that what I just said?

JOHN PIKE: Not exactly, because the option at higher levels of violence is not simply an option between doing nothing and incinerating two hundred million Russians. There are lots of other things that you can do. You can go after refineries, you can go after railroads, you can go after critical military plants with comparatively small collateral damage. But if the Soviets get our ICBMs we're no longer going to be able to execute discriminating attacks. You're go-

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ing to be faced with either doing not much, or firing hundreds and hundreds of warheads, even though that may not be a city-busting campaign. That is why people like Walt Slocombe and James Schlesinger are so violently opposed to the Strategic Defense Initiative: over the last ten or fifteen years, they have been crafting this extended deterrence, flexible response strategy. They have been very concerned about the vulnerability of our ICBMs because they want to be able to execute these small attacks. And the problem with executing them on the Soviet Union is not how many warheads there are in North Dakota, it's how many warheads we have over Sverdlovsk. And American ballistic missile defense may significantly increase the number of surviving ICBM warheads that we have in North Dakota. But Soviet ballistic missile defense is going to totally eliminate the number of warheads we can put over the Soviet Union in a small attack. The cure is worse than the disease. Because the whole reason that one would be concerned about ICBM vulnerability is because of its contribution to our ability to launch small attacks on the Soviet Union. And Soviet ballistic missile defense is going to totally negate our ability to launch small attacks on the Soviets, long before American ballistic missile defense is going to negate Soviet ability to take out our ICBMs.

PETER SHAW: I didn't understand the last ten minutes of your answer.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: Neither did I.

JOHN PIKE: Part of the problem is, frankly, the extreme gap between the way we really do nuclear policy and the way everybody thinks we do nuclear policy. I've heard a lot of discussion here this evening about our policy of mutual assured destruction. We have never had a policy of mutual assured destruction. We have had a policy of flexible targeting and launching small attacks on the Soviet Union since 1967. And I would really be surprised if there were more than one or two people in this room that had even heard of such a thing.

EDITH KURZWEIL: There's just one very simple question I don't quite get. If we have these possibilities of picking out little targets, aren't we assuming that the Soviets aren't going to launch a large nuclear attack? Are they just going to sit there and have us pick off little targets?

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: What do we gain by picking off little targets?

EDITH KURZWEIL: Is it possible to do that?

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JOHN PIKE: I think that the difficulties of this strategy suggest themselves. I'm not here to argue the merits of it, but I assert without fear of well-grounded contradiction that that is our strategy today.
H. J. KAPLAN: I'm astounded to hear you say what you've just said because I spent some time in our NATO mission in Brussels, and I don't think that I'm being indiscreet or giving away any secrets here. I cannot remember a time—unless this happened in the last few years—when the notion of using ICBMs based in this country tactically would ever. . . .
JOHN PIKE: It's not a question of tactical use. It's use against Other Military Targets deep inside the Soviet homeland, such as airfields and supply depots.
H. J. KAPLAN: I mean less than an all out nuclear war, which involves protecting, and expending those nuclear assets, fixed nuclear assets, before they were attacked by anybody else. I'm simply astounded to hear that the use of these weapons in the kind of situation we're talking about is part of our flexible response strategy. This would mean taking the limited number of land missiles, and using them on marshalling yards, as you say, and refineries, and so forth. That was never conceived of. When we first worked out war plans and scenarios, which had a considerable durability, there was never any conception of that. It was always assumed that the use of ICBMs on either side implied necessarily the all out full offensive.
JOHN PIKE: Well there is now and has been since PD 59 in 1979.
GEORGE CHAPLINE: It's my understanding that the reason that we have changed our targeting policy is that we don't really understand what it is that deters the Soviet leadership. And the reasoning that I've heard that went into part of the motivation for allowing the possibility for targeting Soviet military installations in particular (marshalling yards and barracks and so forth), was that it was thought that the Soviet Army—the Army in particular as opposed to other branches of the Soviet military—had an enormous amount of influence in the Soviet Politburo, and therefore we would effectively increase our deterrent by targeting things that the Army in particular valued. We're not sure that if we destroyed Kiev, or maybe even Moscow, the Soviet leaders might not find that acceptable. Suppose they evacuated Moscow? I've heard this from people very high up in the Pentagon.
JOHN PIKE: It would also deny the Soviet Army a plausible theory of victory, because you would be denying them all of Category II and Category III reinforcements. They'd have to go with the

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Category I stuff they had in the theater. And I think that that's the reason that since NSDM [National Security Decision Memorandum] under Mr. Schlesinger in 1974 subsequent revisions of the SIOP [Single Integrated Operational Plan] have increasingly focused on this sort of thing.

ESTELLE LEONTIEF: You said who knows when a mad man in Soviet Russia is going to come to power. The same goes for us.

GEORGE CHAPLINE: I completely disagree. One of the worst things about the discussions about arms control and our situation vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, is the implicit assumption that there is some kind of equality in the political systems of the United States and the Soviet Union. There is a very great difference between the Soviet Union and the United States. The fundamental difference between a democracy and a country like the Soviet Union is that you understand enormously better what the leaders are like.

WASSILY LEONTIEF: Have you read Mr. Stockman?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: You can read books like that, you can hear all kinds of hearsay and rumour. You know what goes on practically in the presidential bedroom. No one knows anything about the Soviet Union.

DENNIS WRONG: I think the term "mad" was invented during McNamara's tenure in the Department of Defense, but really it goes back to the fifties. It was in the early fifties that Churchill talked of the balance of terror, and Robert Oppenheimer talked of two scorpions in a bottle which is exactly the mad doctrine. But it has never been credible, it seems to me, that the United States would retaliate to a first strike by wiping out the Russian population. So my impression is that counterforce, as Mr. Pike mentioned, has been deployed by the United States even earlier than he mentioned, going back probably to the fifties, but certainly at least to McNamara's tenure. Liberal journals are always discovering with shock that our missiles have been aimed not at Moscow but at military bases in Siberia. This it seemed to me makes sense, so "mad," in that sense, has never really been the American policy fundamentally.

KAY AGENA: Mr. Pike, are you against SDI, even assuming that the Soviets are developing their own system? There seems to me to be something absurd about the whole discussion, because if the Soviets are pursuing their own defensive system, I think we're crazy not to try to develop ours. And the evidence is that they are.

JOHN PIKE: If you look at the critical technologies that would go into a ballistic missile defense it's very clear that the United States

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has anywhere from a three- to ten-year lead over the Soviets in any area that would be of particular military use. Now you might argue that we ought to do the SDI so that we can stretch that lead out to twenty or thirty years and win the arms race for a while. It is true that the Soviets do have some things that are in the pipeline that might raise some questions about the ability of the United States to cover targets we would be interested in covering. And I fully support the Reagan administration's decision to develop additional penetration aids that could be fitted on our missiles to deal with plausible Soviet ballistic missile defense that might be deployed in the 1990s. The Soviets would know that they could not hope to achieve any lasting strategic benefit in deploying ballistic missile defense.

GEORGE CHAPLINE: Let me just add that I agree with Mr. Pike.

KAY AGENA: I want to follow up a little. There are political aspects of this issue that are being ignored. I believe—and I think there are others here who agree with me—that the fact that we proposed SDI got the Soviets back to the negotiating table after they walked out. There are very vocal critics of SDI in the media, and not all that much visibility for people who are for pursuing even the research. You say you are for research, but how do you expect to get congressional support to fund the research when you are so adamant in saying SDI will make nuclear war more likely and that it won't work as a system?

JOHN PIKE: We are very vigorous in Congress in supporting a research program. What we are opposing is a development program. In the budget documents that the SDI organization presents to Congress there is a very clear differentiation between the basic research part of the SDI, and the development part of the SDI.

JOANNA ROSE: I'd like to ask Dr. Chapline and Mr. Pike if they think that if we chose not to pursue development of the SDI, the Russians would cease pursuing development?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: No.

JOHN PIKE: If we choose not to pursue development of ballistic missile defense, the Soviets may or may not continue with development of ballistic missile defense.

JOHN PIKE: If we choose to continue development of the SDI, the Soviets will certainly continue development of their ballistic missile defense. My interest is in discouraging the Soviets to continue development of ballistic missile defense, and the only way that there is going to be any possibility of doing that, is if the United States does not continue it. At the same time, I recognize that people and na-

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tions are capable of doing incredibly stupid things. And I think that it is an unarguable political reality in this country that the American political system will not permit significant strategic asymmetries to develop between the United States and the Soviet Union. So if the Soviets do continue with an extensive development program of ballistic missile defense, and if they do start doing more and more things that look like ballistic missile defense, I think that regardless of what the strategic or military merits of going ahead with ballistic missiles defense would be, it would be politically impossible for the United States not to go ahead with development and deployment of ballistic missile defense.

BARRY BELGOROD: Don't we lose our technological lead by waiting?

JOHN PIKE: On the contrary, we freeze our technological lead by starting prototype development. As soon as we go into development that is when we lose our technological lead.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: That's doubletalk.

BARRY BELGOROD: I've been involved in some high tech projects also, and there's a big, big time gap between research and development. You can have all the numbers on paper, but there's always a lot of little factors that you have to figure in order to get something practical.

JOHN PIKE: Right, what's the question?

BARRY BELGOROD: It seems quite obvious that if we're going to wait to see some tangible evidence of Soviet development or deployment of their system, we've already lost some of our lead. You said that all nuclear weapons are now either in the Soviet Union or targeted on the Soviet Union. Therefore it seems quite obvious that the Soviet Union has no choice but to have some sort of antiballistic missile defense.

JOHN PIKE: The question is whether the scope of that ballistic missile defense is such that we need to pay any attention to it. The existing Moscow system, or an upgrade to it—I don't know that anybody is terribly concerned about it.

BARRY BELGOROD: It seems to me that just is an enormous time-lag that you're advocating.

JOHN PIKE: The ABM treaty today limits the Soviets to deploying one hundred operational interceptors around Moscow and fifteen test interceptors at Sary Shagan test facility. Those components are very clearly identifiable components. If the Soviets were to deploy any of those components outside of these two permitted areas, I

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think there would be very little political opposition in this country to taking the appropriate response.

BARRY BELGOROD: What about that radar facility George mentioned?

JOHN PIKE: I think that there is no question that that radar is inconsistent with the ABM treaty and that we ought to be doing everything we can to get them to take the thing down. Unfortunately, Mr. Perle has not given General Ellis, who is our commissioner on the Standing Consultative Commission, any leeway in discussing with the Soviets what can be done to resolve that issue. I also support the Reagan administration's policy of continued adherence to the ABM treaty and trying to get the Soviets back to adhere to the ABM treaty, and I think it would be very stupid for us to throw out the baby with the bath.

LIONEL ABEL: I admired many things about your presentation, but I could not really understand your answer to William Phillips. Because, as I recollect, this country had an enormous advantage over the Soviet Union for many years in its nuclear power. The Soviet Union was never afraid that we would attack them, although we could have.

JOHN PIKE: Of course they were.

LIONEL ABEL: In my opinion that's also a question of your political judgement. My judgement is that they were never afraid. So it doesn't seem clear to me that they would risk a nuclear war if we developed some kind of defense system which we call leaky.

JOHN PIKE: I was not arguing that the Soviets would conduct a preventative war against the United States in order to prevent us from developing a system. I was arguing rather that leaky defenses increase incentives for preemptive war in a time of crisis.

LIONEL ABEL: Why?

JOHN PIKE: Because the difference between striking first and striking second is the difference between survival and annihilation.

LIONEL ABEL: That's also true now. You did not answer that question.

JOHN PIKE: Today there is nothing that either side can do by striking first that would improve postwar outcomes. There is nothing that either side can do today in terms of counterforce attacks that would tangibly or significantly reduce the ability of the other side to inflict damage on urban-industrial assests.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: That's what Lionel and I were saying. That's precisely what you were saying.

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JOHN PIKE: Whereas in a situation where both sides have deployed leaky defenses the side that strikes first could significantly limit damage from retaliation.

LIONEL ABEL: You're implying that there would be an inequality of power if there were leaky defenses on both sides and you are also saying that there is an equality of power if neither side has any defenses. I don't understand that. I would think there'd be an inequality of power if one side had a better leaky defense, but not if both had leaky defenses.

JOHN PIKE: No.

DANIEL ROSE: Can I ask Dr. Chapline to comment on the leaky, less-than-perfect defense?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: I'm not aware of any rigorous arguments that if one side had a leaky defense and the other didn't, that would increase the probability of nuclear war. And I would be completely comfortable with the United States having a defense system and the Soviet Union not having one. Now, of course, if we deployed a leaky defense system, or a system of any kind, the Soviet Union is not going to stand still, and they probably will deploy one of their own. And that would tend to return one to the so-called equilibrium situation where neither side had an advantage. The point which Mr. Pike and the critics have often made is that now there is an equilibrium, in the sense that neither side has an incentive to go first, whereas they refer to the situation where one side has an incentive to go first, and I don't disagree with that, as destabilizing. But what I'm saying is that that's a very prejudicial term because I know of absolutely no argument to prove that in such a situation the probability of nuclear war is significantly higher.

JOHN PIKE: In the literature it's known as the "clever briefer" problem. The question is: in a time of very profound crisis, greater than anything that's been experienced in the nuclear era, would a "clever briefer" be able to approach his leadership and offer a plausible theory of victory? Would a "clever briefer" be able to present a proposal to their leadership as to why they should initiate nuclear war? Now it's true that fortunately since we don't have any empirical data on how nuclear wars get started, it's very difficult to establish rigorously why a war does or does not occur. But within the literature, or the folklore, one of the standard problems, that you have to look at when you're trying to figure out whether you are doing the right thing is this question: the leadership is sitting down there in the bunker, and they have been up for the last thirty-six hours, and they've been drinking

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coffee, and they are cranky, and they don't know what the other guy is up to in this most profound crisis. And a hotshot colonel comes in there and he is a very clever briefer. Is he going to be able to offer a plan to a desperate leadership to resolve the crisis? The concern is that in a situation in which both sides have leaky defenses deployed, the clever briefer could walk through the mathematics of how many missiles get through the defense in a first strike versus how many get through if there are two defensive interceptors per incoming missile, versus how many missiles get through if there are ten interceptor missiles—and so forth and so on. The concern is that with leaky defenses a clever briefer would be able to walk through the mathematics and demonstrate that if we strike first, the other guy is only going to be able to get a hundred warheads to land on our territory. Whereas if we strike second, we're only going to be able to get a hundred warheads to land. But the guy who strikes first is going to be able to put five thousand warheads on the targets. And the difference between striking first and striking second is the difference between 20 million dead and 150 million dead. If I can play out a little scenario here, as General Turgidson said in *Doctor Strangelove*, the clever briefer would say, "I'm not saying we wouldn't get our hair mussed, but I am saying ten to twenty million tops, depending on the breaks."

LIONEL ABEL: He sounds more like a Russian than an American.

BERNARD GROSSMAN: The President appealed to what I think virtually everyone desires, that is, to find some scheme that would motivate us and make it possible for both sides to reduce nuclear arms. Right now, it doesn't seem as if there is sufficient motivation for us to get to the bargaining table and reduce significantly the number of nuclear arms. Policy is essentially based upon mutual assured destruction. And although I have heard discussion on limited nuclear strikes, I think most people would say it's based on mutual assured destruction. With a leaky defense, it seems that this would create the motivation for a reduction in arms. Just using Mr. Pike's argument that there is an advantage in a first strike is additional motivation for each side to go ahead and reduce the arms. I admit that it is possible that the creation of such a system would be more destabilizing. But once the system were present, in operation for both sides, then I think the motivation would be toward reduction on both sides. There would be a defense to protect against the "clever briefer."

DENNIS WRONG: I was worried about the same point that Lionel Abel brought up. I just wanted to make sure that I understand what Mr. Pike said, that the second strike, after a first strike that had

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taken out 150 million people, because of the destruction of offensive missiles on the first strike, could not be nearly as effective as a first strike; therefore, there would be only twenty million dead. Is that what you said?

JOHN PIKE: Ten to twenty million tops, depending on the breaks.

DENNIS WRONG: Even though the defenses were equal, it would still give an advantage to the first striker.

JOHN PIKE: Now I'm not saying we wouldn't get our hair mussed.

DENNIS WRONG: I wasn't clear about that.

JOHN PIKE: That's the whole point. Leaky defenses increase incentives to strike first, because, as the buzzphrase goes, "A leaking umbrella is more effective against a drizzle than a downpour." The leaky defense is going to have to defend against a massive first strike, but a ragged and greatly reduced second strike.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS: But a leaky umbrella doesn't create a downpour.

LIONEL ABEL: However, our leaky defense would be less leaky, according to you, than the Russian defense because we're ahead.

JOHN PIKE: That's a different argument. One of the real questions in this whole debate is, whether there is a compelling case for American strategic superiority over the Soviet Union. That's really what the issue is. And, you know, I frankly find it very curious that the advocates of this are being so incredibly coy about the case for it. Because if you went back twenty years, George McGovern, of all people, in one of his maiden speeches in Congress, gave a ringing endorsement of American strategic superiority. I think there are a lot of silly things about the SDI, but probably the best case one can make for it is that, given the fact that most of the Soviet nuclear forces are on land where we can blow them up with Trident II, given the fact that their submarines are as noisy as old washing machines and we can sink most of those with our strategic ASW forces, given the fact that we've got stealth bombers that can go through their air defense like a hot knife through butter—while they have clunky old bombers and we'd be able to shoot most of them down—and given the fact that our ballistic missile defense technology is five to ten years ahead of theirs and our countermeasures technology is much further ahead than theirs, and given the fact that SDI is going to put us far ahead of them, I would say that it is not implausible, that it cannot be excluded, that if we go ahead and do all of this, that we could create a situation some time in the mid-to-late 1990s where we could blow up the Russians and there wouldn't be too much they could do about that, if we struck first.

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And so I think that the real questions posed by the SDI are: do we think it is something that would be interesting and useful to have; and how long do we think we can hang onto it; and is all of this process going to be worth it? One way to conceptualize what the SDI is doing is that the goal is to turn back the nuclear clock. President Reagan has this vision that somehow or other we're going to turn back the nuclear clock to some time in 1944 and essentially disinvent nuclear weapons. I think realistically that the SDI, in concatenation with all this other stuff we're doing, all these other damage limitation capabilities that we're developing, and asymmetries between Soviet and American damage limitation capabilities, does hold open the prospect of turning back the nuclear clock to some time in the 1950s. A situation where we could incinerate the Soviet Union, and they might be able to tear off an arm and a leg, but we'd be here and they wouldn't. And the question is, did we really find that condition to be comfortable and useful in the 1950s. Are we going to be able to stay in 1952, or is history going to repeat and are we going to just keep drifting back into the sixties when the whole thing stabilizes. I think that that is what the real debate is about here.

BARRY BELGOROD: But isn't that very educational for the Russians? That takes us back to what this gentleman told us: when we had gross superiority over the Russians and didn't use it.

JOHN PIKE: Of course we did. All the time. We rattled our rockets like crazy back then. The point is not to incinerate Russia. The point is to get the Soviets to back down in some crisis far short of actually using the things, to keep them from escalating. That's how we kicked the Soviets out of Cuba.

BARRY BELGOROD: To get them to come to the bargaining table and really talk business with us.

JOHN PIKE: But the administration doesn't want them to do that, the administration wants to win the arms race.

EDITH KURZWEIL: No we don't.

DANIEL ROSE: Mr. Pike, with all due respect, this is not a "Star Wars" discussion, this is a discussion of your geopolitical views which is not relevant for the moment. Are there other questions?

GEORGE CHAPLINE: No one responded to the point Bernard Grossman raised about whether or not deploying a defensive system would create a motivation for greatly reducing offensive nuclear weapons. In fact we have the motivation now to decrease offensive nuclear weapons in the sense that the person who strikes first *now* has a great

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advantage, without any defensive system. But SDI creates the opportunity for greatly decreasing offensive nuclear weapons. If you had a defensive system, then both sides could greatly decrease their nuclear weapons and feel relatively secure, at least, vis-a-vis attacks from ballistic missile systems.

BARRY BELGOROD: One last point. If we are so technologically superior to the Russians, in stealth bomber technology, in submarine targeting—targeting of submarine based missiles and the like—why is our second-strike capability so lousy?

JOHN PIKE: Are you talking about our second-strike capability being weak, now, or in the 1990s?

BARRY BELGOROD: The present.

JOHN PIKE: It's not weak right now. No, I was referring to our second-strike capability being weak two or three decades from now, when both sides had symmetrically leaky forces. Today, we've run out of things to blow up. Today we have targeted every named geographical feature in the Soviet Union.

EDITH KURZWEIL: We haven't blown up anything.

BARRY BELGOROD: I guess I'll have to quote you in your New York Academy of Sciences lecture, that we have a significant portion of our nuclear forces in relatively invulnerable vehicles, which are our submarines, so we *de facto* have a leaky defense, of sorts, against a first-strike capability. Do we not?

JOHN PIKE: The question of the leaky defenses is the asymmetry between first strike and second strike, and mutual vulnerability of the systems and the mutual vulnerability of the forces.

BARRY BELGOROD: But our second strike forces are relatively invulnerable as they stand now, correct?

HAROLD BRODKEY: "Invulnerable" is a dangerous term. Recently, Daniel Ford, in his book *The Button*, wrote that he had gone to the NORAD Cavern in Colorado, and there the general in charge told him that in an attack he would call the White House on a hot line. Ford asked him to demonstrate. The general picked up his phone and couldn't get it to work. Later, after investigating, he told Ford that it was a regular AT&T line and that he'd forgotten to dial long distance. Ford points out that the computers that run the warning system wear out, they're old, they're always being repaired, and a number of them are always down. Part of what Chapline may be saying, it seems to me, is that the situation is so bad that going ahead offers more hope at this stage than previously.

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WILLIAM PHILLIPS: If you're right about the weakness of the Soviet military establishment, I can't understand how they attain such enormous superiority when we begin to build up a defense system.
JOHN PIKE: What superiority are they building up?
WILLIAM PHILLIPS: Well that they can ruin us with their first strike, but that we can't ruin them with ours.

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FICTION

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AMERICA YOU HAVE GONE AND LEFT ME

Daniel, Christopher, and I (his crew) fly up to Maine. Daniel wants to beat the hurricane and cross over to the Bay of Fundy as soon as we get to Northeast Harbor. It's his style to be in a hurry. I come midpoint in age between Christopher and Daniel. A lover of hard rock, Chris drinks *Swiss Miss* hot chocolate, and is sweet and dense. Daniel goes for beer and Manhattans. With me it's seltzer laced with lemon. Chris could be my son, Daniel my father.

I am not a nautical woman. I have a fear of the sea and don't like living in cramped spaces. I don't like the look of most of the women I've seen when we've been docked at boatyards. Their faces are glazed with a false heartiness. They walk the ramps with the aimlessness of casual dumb money. But Daniel is profoundly involved with the sea, and his succession of wives and sometime girlfriends have always sailed with him. In order to avoid sea-panic, I have brought with me a canvas needlepoint, the size of a chair seat, which needs filling in. Reads: ROOSEVELT VICTORIOUS. I found it in a general store, and it caught my eye.

"Okay, you children of nature. Here are the lists, provision up," snaps Daniel. Tall, and heavy-shouldered, his head seems unduly massive, and his neck too short. The thickness of his gray hair gives him a bellicosely healthy look younger than his years. But as Daniel measures his age by his ability to handle his yawl, he has started to brood about his loss of physical strength—which is why he is mad at Chris, who has been earning money running boats down to Bermuda and the Keys. Daniel knows he will need his help for anchor-lifting.

"Our refugee from prep school thinks he's a sailor. Well, he ain't." Daniel affects an old-fashioned Harvard version of Tracy-Cagney street talk. Makes him sound 1950s Boston snobbish. He is a shy man, and I half listen to his out-of-date invective, the same way I half listen to Chris's Heavy Metal.

"Your hair is getting in your way," he says, looking at me. "After Adelina cut off her mop she looked like a boy with her crew

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cut. But is was a hell of a lot safer than sailing with it flying into her eyes. If you'd trim it short, now, you'd be salty as a chicklet."

Adelina blew her brains out about five years ago. I don't answer, but lower myself back down into the cabin. I am intent on imposing my own will on the use of galley space. What will be stowed where has become amazingly important to me. I have no intention of hacking off my hair, or in any way imitating Adelina, but as the limited space imposes on the passengers a repetition of ritualistic gestures, I feel my own initiative is superfluous. At times I feel I have become a new version of her. Still, I retain my own thoughts and my own voice. Clearly Adelina was more addicted to list-making than I, and, as Daniel is always buying me prune juice—which I never drink—I have figured out that she must have suffered from constipation. Daniel assumes it will take me an hour to dress, which is fifty minutes too much. He expects me to have nightmares, and seems surprised that I fall asleep easily, not waking until the following morning. He says his early days with Adelina were paradise. Well, I don't want to open that can of worms. My own marriage was earthbound. Kids, bills, some fighting about us both having careers and so forth. Four years ago Lewis died of cancer.

I have had a lot of sadness, but no complicated ghosts haunt me. Sometimes I get mad at Lewis for dying and leaving me to do it all alone and I grumble, "So you let the whole show fall on my shoulders, so thanks a lot."

Because I want to know more about where we are going I am reading about the Bay of Fundy. I don't know the rules of the sea. I'm not yare. Although Daniel is a good sailor, his weakness is that he underinforms his crew. BAY OF FUNDY . . . THE GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC. *Elena, is this trip necessary? You need the graveyard of the Atlantic? You are traveling with a first-rate sailor who no longer values his own life.* My dentist—I am sure he bought his Bermuda 40 on my kids' braces—has been slipping me sea knowledge while drilling cavities. "I wouldn't take an inexperienced sailor like you or my wife across the Bay of Fundy at night. With a crew of just one? And why do you have to do all that cooking? What's wrong with a once-in-a-while shore dinner?" During my root canal time with him, though, my dentist slipped me a lot of sailing information. Which leaves Daniel at times baffled as to the source for my odd bits of knowledge.

"May Day originally came from *m'aidez*," I say flatly.

"M'aidez?"

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"'Help me' in French—well, we are going into French territory. I mean the French and Spanish had something to do with the discovering of America. I mean, Columbus wasn't exactly a Harvard man. . . ."

"Sweetie, put the booze in the lazaret beneath the back bunk. Hard stuff in the head."

"Last week I saw a revival of *L'Atalante* at the Regency. . . ."

"L'Atalante?"

"An old French movie about a barge. There is this girl, she marries the bargeman. He takes her away from her home, only she doesn't understand that he needs to make his living from the barge. So, she runs away when they dock along the quay, in Paris. To see the shop windows and. . . ."

"Sweetie, get your books off the bunk and stop babbling about some Frog movie. We'll sail through the night—three shifts and make it across in twelve to fifteen hours."

"I've never night sailed."

Chris looks at Daniel like he is wacko. "I'll do your turn with you, Mrs. Becker."

I weave red, white and blue yarn through the ROOSEVELT, avoiding noticing the fog and cold. I use all my energy simply in order not to make mistakes. Where I sit, how I move seems determined by Daniel or the demands of the yawl. I feel oddly passive. Daniel steers while Chris is sacked out on one of the bunks. I am seated in a corner of the deck, away from the wind. The needlepoint keeps me from thinking about the graveyard of the Atlantic. I've brought with me *Tender Is the Night*, *The Good Soldier*, *People* Magazine and the new Random House edition of *Swann's Way*.

Daniel looks up at me. "Mind if I ask you a personal question, Elena?"

I have always found Daniel's sudden formalities of speech, sandwiched in between "fuck the bastards" and hot sex, mind boggling.

"Shoot."

"Does it bother you that I have never asked you about your work?"

"Oh, my writing."

"Well—it's not very much my thing."

In point of fact Daniel was my first publisher. He owned Braden's Press in Boston. During the McCarthy era, the time I was in college, Braden's Press was one of the things that held. God, how

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awestruck I was of Daniel! Then when I met him in the late fifties he gave me twenty-five dollars for an angry essay I wrote about the evils of America for the small (but classy) monthly Braden's put out. *She who starts out writing indignant essays, from the left, may end up, in age, living aboard yachts.* Suddenly I feel old. Like my future has been wrenched from me.

"Well, Elena, I'll applaud you from afar. But I ain't spending no time at no shitty literary parties. Bunch of writer clowns. Amateurs thinking they can fix up the world. And, anyhow, who gives a shit? It's all over, now."

I am, meanwhile, fumbling with a throw-away lighter which won't work in the wind. Realizing I have lost the Zippo he gave me, Daniel goes into a sudden rage, grabs it from my hand and tosses the Cricket overboard. *Your not taking care with the Zippo must have something to do with an ancient quarrel between him and Adelina.* I stare at my unlit cigarette, then up at him. "I need your lighter, Daniel." Two heavy smokers crossing the Bay of Fundy with one Zippo is not great.

Daniel is suddenly shocked by his own rage. "When we dock in Canada, I'll buy you a gold-plated Zippo, and take you to a Frog restaurant." Daniel went to school in France.

He is trying to make peace with Adelina, with you. To make things work out. I go back down into the cabin to check my gear, maybe I had packed a spare lighter. Water is gushing through the galley, rapidly filling the cabin. Chris, sprawled on the bunk, is in a deep young boy sleep. "Daniel," I yell, "the cabin's filling with water!"

"No dumb games at sea," he answers back.

Chris wakes up, "Mr. Braden, the sea cocks are open!"

"What mother-fucking clown in that mother-fucking boatyard has been fooling around here?" Daniel shouts to Chris that they need to switch tacks. Water is coming in through the cabin floor. The men rapidly get on another tack, pushing me out of the way, while they set up the automatic bailer. They begin ripping up floor boards, looking for the right sea cock. The cabin feels crowded and soaking. Out of the port hole the horizon appears empty of other craft.

Still, Chris passes me enough information while he rapidly pumps the water out for me to realize that we are all right, the yawl won't sink. I have no real sense of what is dangerous at sea. Would the Coast Guard miraculously arrive in time to get us safely out of the fog? My only gauge of what is happening is the degrees of fear shown by Daniel and Christopher. *But if you don't know the rules, you shouldn't play the game.* Daniel has located the sea cock. "One of the

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boatyard men must have left off the cap," he grunts. Chris stuffs the hole with rags. The bailer worked well, the flood has receded. *If we had switched tacks at night, and the leak had occurred then, we would have drowned.* Suddenly, I dash into the head. I'm scared that I'll do something dumb. Like scream—let me off this boat. My delayed hysteria embarrasses me. *Just pretend that you are twenty years old, aboard a transatlantic crossing. It's a rough night. You are dressing for a ship's ball. Applying false eyelashes.* (Which I compulsively glue on now—because I can't imagine a boat sinking while I am wearing false eyelashes.) *You are going to a ship's dance, a dazzling future.* I concentrate on getting my face in order. Brush my hair, put on cologne, the lot. When I come out of the head I seem calm. Or maybe I am sleepwalking.

"We can make it to Canada, Mr. Braden. I've run sloops down to Bermuda stuffed with rags."

"Not this yawl," Daniel snaps. "Head her back to Maine." He stares at the cabin, which smells of salt, wet, and soaked denim. The cloth now has a peculiar horse stable odor.

"Well, Elena—you did pretty good. Say, your eyes are glistening—what did you do to them?"

I don't intend to admit that applying false eyelashes kept me from going nuts, so I just shrug.

I get out the red clay pot which is shaped like a nesting chicken. The roaster is kept in the lazaret beneath Daniel's bunk. I have carefully kept it towel-wrapped to avoid its being slammed about during a rough sea. With rapid, automatic gestures I stuff the clay roaster with two small chickens, herbs, and tarragon vinegar. The pot is the one thing that I've given Daniel which always remains aboard. It's the only object that has to do with me that lives on the yawl. My person, my books, my clothes are temporary visitors. The clay chicken stays.

Chris is steering now. He watches me cook. The galley is right next to the hatch. "Mrs. Becker—wouldn't it be easier on you if you just opened a can?"

"No," Daniel answers. In the matter of fixing chickens we are very united. "Elena is making her special copulating birds. Before Elena came on board and brought her clay pot I never realized that there could be a way of roasting fowl. See?" He holds up the earthenware. "It's magic. Bastes through the chicken's eyes—beautiful, isn't it?"

"Chunky-chunk is quicker," Chris says.

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When we reach the Maine harbor, none of the boatyard men are available. The hurricane is beginning. They are busy transferring the boats to a safer harbor. The old man who used to run the place died last spring; the yard has been bought by a hotel chain conglomerate. The dockhands finally come over to us, and they reach for the lines.

"Sea cocks were open," Daniel says. "And the compass is fucked up." Without waiting for their reply, he walks rapidly along the pier, in the direction of the yard office.

Meanwhile, Chris has informed us that he means to jump ship. "I'm getting the wrong vibes—I'm not in a mood to sit out a hurricane here in Northeast. But it was nice talking to you, Mrs. Becker, about those books." And he takes his gear and departs.

"Adelina never liked staying aboard during the hurricanes," Daniel tells me after he comes out of the office. So we wait out the weather in a modern motel. Our bedroom has a good view of the blowing winds in the harbor. I get undressed. I like sleeping with Daniel, but I like it in his own house. The motel, with its oversized beds, and big TV tube seems bleak. Still it beats those Victorian New England rooming houses with mushy, salty mattresses.

Daniel wants to sail the yawl back down to Hannah's Point, in Southern Connecticut. He sits on the edge of my bed, scotch and ice in a paper cup in his hand, he telephones all his friends to find one of his pals who is willing to crew us back down the coast. But they already have made plans.

"Well, Sweetie, they've got their lives, and their mewling grandchildren, and nutty kids coming up for the weekend. And I'm stuck here, with three wild hurricanes coming up from the Gulf—so, why don't you leave too?" he snaps, throwing me a new Zippo. *Must have bought it when he went for the papers.*

"Your friends haven't deserted you—they just can't fly up to Northeast Harbor at the drop of a hat."

"My, my—aren't we sweet reason. Well, Elena, it's your turn at the phone. Make your calls to your kiddies, and your other fifty million friends. And check in on your career. But, dear heart, don't exaggerate your predicament. Make sure that you communicate that you are sitting out this hurricane in the Harbor View Motel. I don't want to hear, later, no crap about our being stranded in the middle of the Atlantic. Well," he pauses, "Why don't you follow Christopher's example? I'll put you on a plane at Bangor."

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Daniel will keep on sailing. But not in the same way again. No more brash solo flights.

"You want me to help you get the . . ." (I hesitate, because I hate calling the yawl by its real name. The *Adelina II.*) "your boat back home?"

"Sweetie, yup."

"So help me. Explain how things work, okay?"

Daniel turns on a baseball game. Red Sox fan. "Lewis's death affected me. Poor bastard, dying young. Oh, Elena, I know you think me nutty because I talk to Adelina's ghost. Or—her presence. But maybe you could use a few conversations with Lewis's spirit? I mean he was a nice guy. Christ, it wasn't his fault. . . . You think, when I introduce you as his widow, I am depriving you of your precious identity. Well, Elena, you screw good and you ain't dumb about sex, and I screw good and I ain't dumb about sex. But for all your brains you are dumb about the world and men. Look honey, except for a few big time geniuses, writers come and they go. Just the hired help. But you ain't no hired help—you are Lewis Becker's widow. A Harvard widow. What gets a man about a woman is who has been there before. Who has used the territory, and, explicitly, exactly how. If the guy was first rate, that's what excites a man. A widow ain't no reject. Honey, I may be rich but I ain't no bastard. I'm explaining it to you."

"Why didn't you sleep with Lewis?"

Daniel roars with laughter. "I switched to women for good when I was eighteen. There ain't nothing you can say about sex, because, Sweetie, I've tried it all." Daniel pauses, "Say, these are great workbenches."

"Beds."

"Workbenches. Okay, okay. Beds. You win. . . . Let's make love." Soon we are going through the familiar gestures of what I like, what Daniel likes. It is the one part of his life where he is oddly giving. His mouth, hands are tender. It's his voice that is never intimate. The wires have become crossed, there in the voice. And the eyes. Askewly dull, at odds with the energetic body. While we are making love, Daniel suddenly whispers: "You and me are on the *Adelina*, Christopher is still with us. I say, Elena, for Christ sake, he's nineteen and horny. . . ." Involuntarily I suddenly glance at the motel bedroom door. "Elena, Sweetie—he jumped ship. Stop worrying. I say, Elena, give it to him, the two of you, on the bunk. In your

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fancy voice you reply, no, Daniel . . . I couldn't do that. I want to sleep with you Daniel. Then I tell you . . . the kid needs it too."

"Daniel . . ."

He gets out of me the reaction he had wanted. And, abruptly, he tumbles to the side of me, spent. He grins. "They wept and they fucked. They fucked and they wept." And soon he is asleep. Night. An American motel. We are two people finally trying to walk away from one another. But the sex goes on. I fall asleep first. When I waken it is early morning. I hear Daniel in the can, making a clatter. "Is that you Daniel?"

"For Christ's sake. Haven't you learned during four years to stop asking each morning, 'Daniel, is that you?' Who the hell else do you expect it to be?" I doze off again, familiar with his vague invective.

* * *

Later that week we are able to sail the *Adelina II* out of the harbor. In spite of bad patches of fog, for reasons that seem to have little to do with Daniel and me, life on the yawl, abruptly, begins to work. Our habits are meshing better, I remember not to lose the Zippo. We are making eight-hour runs through the fog. When we pull into a cove, around five in the evening, I take territorial possession of the yawl. I have out the pots and pans, and have pulled apart the kitchen stove.

"You can never say this millionaire didn't keep you well supplied with Comet."

After supper we play Checkers. *Feels like you are back in Camp Wigmachi. The counselor posted a chart on the wall near your cot. Your weekly schedule.*

We make it through to the Cape Canal in time to pull into a cove for the second hurricane. Daniel throws the first anchor out. But he's afraid it won't hold. I can't see the harbor because we are whirling too fast in a circle. I hear the putter of the Coast Guard near us. It's okay, I know. I pick up my copy of *People* magazine, lie down on the bunk with it, and bite into a Granny Smith apple.

Daniel seems confused, he senses that no anxious vibes are coming from me. It's like he has lost something. Like the situation has gotten out of control because I am peacefully chewing an apple.

Daniel, meanwhile, has stretched out on the opposite bunk. His hair is soaked through, he throws the blue woolen cap his mother

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had knit for him while he was in the Navy in World War II on the floor.

"Elena . . . the sails have gotten loose. Do you think you can make it up on deck, and batten them down?"

He is angry at himself for having to ask you.

"My back's gone out. Any knot will do."

I crawl along first one side of the deck, do what needs being done, then do the same on the other side. The rain is coming down in thick sheets. *Poor judgement to be up alone on a slippery deck with winds at gale strength.* The yawl is dancing. My knotting and securing of the sails has been haphazard. I crawl back into the cabin and dry myself. Daniel, meanwhile, has been trying to rub Ben Gay into his shoulder muscles. "Let me," I say.

"Oh, you're killing me," he yells in mock pain. I continue to massage his back. "Daniel, I've been thinking about Braden's Press . . . your generation were the big time investors in idealism. And now you're speculating in big time despair. I'd say that they are both luxury items. Marginal stuff."

Daniel just stares at me. When I finish I put the ointment back in the medicine shelf in the head. "Start off with wild sex fantasies," I yell back, "And you end up with Ben Gay."

* * *

Night. I have finished the RO in ROOSEVELT. Red, white and blue.

"Hurricanes don't bother you too much," he observes.

When it comes right down to it, you are more of a New Englander than Daniel. "After all . . . I grew up along this coast. All those long summers. Mystic, Essex. Saybrook. Daniel, we have to pass by Plum Island. When I was a kid I spent days at the beach just looking at it. The island was in the part of the coast just opposite our house, I pretended that it belonged to my folks."

"I can't sail you by there. It's military property. Off bounds."

"My Plum Island?"

". . . is being used for experiments in germ warfare."

"One summer we lived in a real Captain's house by the sea. Had a widow's walk, and secret passageways. There was a fierce hurricane that August, and when we came back to our house on the beach, most of the houses and boats along the boardwalk had been smashed. Except for my older brother's sailboat. Really. It was in

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the New London newspaper. *CHILD'S SAILBOAT SURVIVES DESTRUCTION OF NEW ENGLAND COAST.* My brother, and my father and I made a pact. That the three of us were going to live forever and ever in Essex, because it was the most beautiful white town in the world . . ."

Suddenly, I stop. I actually hear what I have been saying. And I see the ROOSEVELT needlepoint with which I am working. *But you can't remain that child, measuring the world by Plum Island. How did you manage to find a Daniel—the very person who would sail you so near to it? Maybe you have wanted to go home, Elena. Okay, all the human race wants that, now and then. But to have blindly, submissively, followed the wrong man. To have gone about it like a sleepwalker. Because you could never admit to yourself the simple news. You wanted to go home. You wanted the grown-ups to remain uncomplicated, to be true blue, to hold. Remember those old RKO newsreels when FDR waved and smiled? He seemed to you then like God. Ah, Roosevelt, where are you now?* And the tears come down my cheeks.

"Elena, I didn't mean to make you cry." Daniel leaps up. He associates tears with Adelina and instantly envisions sorrow turning into disaster.

"I miss Lewis," I say finally. That is a concrete emotion which Daniel could understand. *But you are crying for yourself.*

"I never meant to scare you. Just wanted to teach you how to handle the *Adelina II.* In the Navy you learn that the only safe way to teach greenhorn sailors about the sea is through the use of small doses of fear."

"In the Navy? Daniel . . . are you referring to World War II? *Now?*"

The yawl whirls, rocks. Daniel gets into my bunk, bad neck, bad back and all. We start to play steamy childlike games. The smell of the salt air mixes with the salt and dampness of our own bodies. "Let's do a cornball, Hershey-bar type movie fantasy," Daniel says. "We are back twenty-five years. You walk into Braden's Press . . . just the way you did in real life then. I remember the first time I met you. A snooty, uppity kid. With that damned thing you wrote about the end of American innocence. Or whatever it was about. I don't remember anymore. But there is no Lewis, no Adelina, no complications. And you turn me on. The way you keep saying, yes, Mr. Braden, with that look. Your 'You should drop dead Mr. Braden,' look . . . And I make a pass at you."

"In Braden's press? With all those nice old ladies around? Why, Mr. Braden," I join in the script, "I am shocked. Boston has failed me."

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"Meanwhile the old ladies have been called away from Braden's press. The mayor of Boston has died and the women are attending his funeral."

"While . . . meanwhile . . . at Braden's Press . . . we are . . ."

"Copulating."

"Suddenly?"

"As soon as you walk into that office. *Promptly.*"

"Then what?"

"We fall in love. And I take you for a sail out of Boston harbor on, say, a twenty-footer. Now there's a fine grade-B movie fantasy." When he stops talking, Daniel reaches for me. "Let's go," he shouts in coital ecstasy, while I grip the sides of the bunk. The yawl is rocking. Spinning like an out-of-control carousel. "The dinghy's going under!" Daniel yells. And comes, and hurls himself up the hatch.

* * *

New London: We sail past the bleak outline of summer cheapo beach houses. The New England coast looks end-of-summer sad. September fog. The July-August boats have pulled in weeks ago. We pass a few lonely lobster trawlers, they glide by us like pirate ghost ships. I listen to the clanking of rusty buoys, the mewling of fog horns. On the day we pass near Plum Island, further down the coast, I can't see her outline because the fog is bad. On our last real run, after hours of going by the compass, we finally see, dimly, the slopes of Long Island. The yawl has been pitching and rolling all day, but toward evening we get the right wind. I feel sure I have the *Adelina II* under some control. Daniel is in the head. I'm no longer fighting the yawl, nor she me: it's working. When Daniel comes up the hatch, he stares for a moment at me steering, just the way he has taught me to do. "Five degrees off. Well, you do steer pretty good. Some people never get the feel of a compass. Still, steering ain't sailing. But if you don't get seasick today—with this pitch and roll—you ain't never going to get seasick. Some do, some don't," he pauses. "Elena, you are making yourself positively useful." He raises the binoculars to find the next buoy. Suddenly he fumbles and rubs his eyes. He takes the wheel and hands me the glasses. "Elena, you try."

Your eyes have twenty years on his. You can't pretend you can't locate the buoy because he needs to find it. If you don't know the rules of the game, don't play. So I point. I look up at Daniel. "You're doing fine," he says. I think our affair, now, is over.

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On the island side we pull into a deserted cove. The weather is clearing. We will make it in a few hours in the morning across the Sound. A yawl that has been trailing behind us, following our course, pulls along side of us. Hannah's Point, Daniel's town, is painted beneath the boat's name: *The Happy Jumping Jack.* Daniel winces. But he calls to them, and asks them up for a drink. I rapidly move about the cabin. Fix myself up. I put some egg tomatoes and celery sticks on a plate. "I have to call you Mrs. Braden," Daniel yells from the deck. "You don't mind?"

A floppy couple. The woman looks at us, at the plate of celery, the ice bucket and glasses, and she moans, "Oh, Martin, I *told* you that she was going to turn out to be one of those super boat women. For me, the last eight hours has been one steady upchuck." But, despite their lack of style, they are a couple meshed to one another.

"My wife never gets seasick," Daniel tells them. Then he takes them on a tour of the yawl. I see it now through their eyes. Our cabin looks too antiseptic, too polished down. No alien objects in view. Like many pathologically shy men who have been in a position of some power, Daniel seems unaware that his manner is paralyzing the other couple. Makes them feel they have been summoned here like two drowned rats for a very quick drink, and they are soon meant to leave.

Suddenly Daniel leans down and fishes out the clay roaster. "This is Elena's special chicken. The bird has sailed on the Adel . . . on the yawl from Barbados to Canada."

"Very decorative, Mr. Braden. A nice homey touch," the husband mutters crossly. He must feel that his wife has been put down for vomiting too easily.

"You provision at Mazzini's?" she asks me.

"I've never asked my wife to stock the yawl," Daniel interrupts, "or make breakfast. Or lift an anchor. Rule of sea. Good skippers take care of their first mates."

"It's been interesting meeting you, Mr. Braden." Abruptly the man motions his wife to leave. "Can't say that the feminist movement has made it to this craft, has it Mrs. Braden?"

We watch them board their dinghy and motor to their *Happy Cracker Jack.*

"Well," says Daniel, "they ain't no sailors, no way." But during the evening he keeps looking over at their yawl. "Making seaweed clambakes on deck. Hibachis! These days every moron in this piss-poor world thinks he's got a right to clutter up the sea with their

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dumb crud. Better to give it back to the lions, the tigers, the fish and the birds. Now swans, Elena, after they lose their mates, they never remate. Just keep paddling. But swans don't deserve much. Too dumb to know how to build nests. They pull the same crap around each year, always putting it in the wrong place. . . ." he pauses.

"That man clearly envied me. With that dead-loss Madame Vomit wife of his. I saw him looking at you, Elena. He was impressed. I must say, you did nicely as Mrs. Braden."

Daniel's unaware that he had used up all the oxygen; had semi-paralyzed three people in the cabin.

"Do you mind, Elena, if I ask you a personal question?"

"What did you say, Daniel?"

". . . a personal question. How long do you think a marriage between us would last?"

But the affair is over. I have been following a different scenario. I hesitate too long. Then Daniel's pride is hurt so he quickly starts to mimic me. "What did you say, Daniel? What did you say? Is that you, Daniel?" Then his mood shifts again, "Wouldn't have thought, umpteen years ago, that afternoon, you, Lewis and Adelina and I sat together on our lawn, at Hannah's Point, that you and me would have ended up together in the sack. Wasn't in the cards. Oh, I had a few thoughts. Sitting there. Watching you with Lewis. You see a woman looking subdued, refined, and there ain't no sex talk—just babble about politics and the control of nuclear energy, and then you look at her man, and gauge his sexuality, and you can guess at all the things she's heard and done. Because men know other men. And all that turns a man on, and he gets curious. Not that I would have done anything. I truly loved Adelina. But you and I, in our varying types of relation to each other . . . have . . . have been oddly enduring." Suddenly he stops. And his face turns fierce, and he runs up on deck. "Adelina, you bitch," he yells into the Long Island night, "leave us alone!"

I go up there, after him. And make him come back down into the cabin. "Daniel, those voices you hear, that's you . . . not her. Buy yourself a new yawl," I spit out at him, "and name it something that makes sense. *Daniel's yawl.*" I pause, and take a deep breath. "It has nothing to do with who did what to whom. Survival matters," I pause, "Adelina was crazy." I've made my voice deliberately flat. "Nuts. Off her rocker. Suicides leave shitty voices behind."

Daniel seems shocked. "You are doing her an injustice."

"Anybody alive is worth more than the dead."

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"You believe that?"

"Yes."

Funny, when I do get around to giving Daniel something, he goes right past it. Turns me down.

"Well, Elena," he says stiffly, "these four years between us. Our off and on, in the end . . ." he pauses, "It's come down to one of those casual things."

"Casual?" I look at him. He means, now, to smash. "Casual's not a word in my vocabulary."

Daniel sits down on his bunk. And he puts his oversize head between his two hands, and he weeps with the noisiness of a big man. "You brought the yawl back home, Elena. You stuck with it. A man has to be moved by something in this putrid world."

"But the world's never been putrid to you. You are crying for yourself," I snap at him.

Now it is me who has come up on deck, leaving Daniel behind. Almost yelling at the skies. "Daniel . . . you are no different from those blue-jeaned kids, aimlessly wandering from town to town. Except you are a rich *turista*, and you have other *gurus*. Like fighting the elements that have long ago been tamed. Nature lovers, the lot of you, with murderer's hearts."

But that's not who you were, Daniel. And I stand on the deck, remembering how wonderful and pure Braden's Press seemed to me then. *But you, Elena, were never that innocent. You lead people like Daniel on. Tell him to go free. When what you meant was just a little free. So suburban America, as well as the hippies, yippies, yuppies, and porno cable sex are all hanging out. And now you want to put it back. Have again the dull old good America of your childhood.*

Daniel knows you meant to wound him. And did.

"Elena," Daniel calls from below, "Ah, sweetie, come back down."

You, Elena, are the one who wants the affair to end. You are the grown-ups now. And I climb down back the hatch, knowing tomorrow we will be at Hannah's Point, and it will all be over, and a new phase will begin. I become quieter. When I think about things clear-mindedly, why, my existence—away from the yawl—is shaping up quite nicely. There are all sorts of new possibilities. But as I stare through the porthole at the sullen Long Island night sky, I whisper, so *sotto voce* Daniel, who I will never stop wanting until the end of my days, doesn't hear—Roosevelt, Roosevelt I need you now.

* * *

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POEMS

Linda Gregerson

FOR MY FATHER, WHO WOULD RATHER STAY HOME

No deadfall in these woods of yours.
No
hollowed-out trunks.

No needy,
unseemly
hanging on, as puts

a man with a chainsaw
to shame.
The row of rusting oildrums and the

spavined Ford are nearly
obscured
by sumac and scrub,

whose thin-legged plans for the future
outrun
all reasonable grounds for hope.

It's ground you never meant
to give.
If bracken

wants to euphemize an un-
regenerate
combine and a heap

of salvaged pipe,
it works
its homely camouflage unbidden

and unblessed.
The Ford
might lend you parts someday, and woe

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betide the nesting squirrels
who've taken
to its deep front end. Life

is exactly long
enough,
except for the thin-skinned

or beggarly
daughters,
who haven't struck your bargain

with the pure hard edge
of luck.
Remember when we planted the Norway

pine? Five hundred seedlings
the first
year and not one of them made

full growth. No light.
Or scant
light, what the grudging oaks

let through. What you love
best
shall be taken away

and taken away in the other
life too,
where you haven't got

a stand of oak at all,
old man,
nor three winters' cordwood,

nor work for the heart,
nor hapless
daughters

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to mortgage everything up.
You think
I haven't gathered how

the world divides?
The un-
stanched, unrequited lapse

of time has been your
quarrel
since before I learned to

temporize, till every other
word's
goodbye. It shouldn't be

too much to ask, this
dying
on familiar ground, but look

at the bracken, keeping
the ground
in place. You who don't

reproach me
reproach me
with failing to see,

as though a traveler,
finding
the inn a pleasant one,

should lose his way.
The way
you have in mind makes mine

digression, but
while age
may be your privilege, it's

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no alibi.
The parable
means absent without leave,

you see. I'll keep you
as long
as the woods are deep,

and then I'll let you go.

Eleanor Ross Taylor

MARCH 9

Such days as this it rains in Norwood.
March. The wind whistles under its breath
as that woman did, sewing. Afraid of—?
Yes, it's surely raining in Norwood cemetery.
But here, in the dry shrubbery, bloom's opiate,
the earth rejects the dead,
breezes erase, erase, and the slate's clean.

No. It reads March 9, 1910.

The buggy bumps smartly
along the polished clay.
Under the lap robe hands fuse.

They lie together.
No water floats them out,
the walls a hardened cavity.

A little wet snow fell this day.

The same starved hyacinths rise up among the weeds.
Some backwoods hand will pillage.

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Breath her-age-then will gulp the still-rich smell.
The spice issues from bulb to bulb.
Her fluid hand enhanced.
Her radiance loosed the dormant tongues.

All dead hands are the same age: dead.
I note my own.
Last year, trembling,
they harvested hyacinths
for the graves' navels.
Has no one cleared away
that desiccation among the stones?

Another desiccation comes.

It rains. The rain is young.

Elizabeth Spires

STONINGTON SELF-PORTRAIT

Old sinner, pilgrim of doubt,
today I had a vision of you, myself
in thirty years, sitting
in a rusted wrought-iron chair
bolted to the selfsame stony hill
I've stared at days now. The hill,
matted with grass, wildflowers,
only a stone's throw
from my bedroom window, the sea's door.
Gulls toss above it, like blown bits
of paper, the tide recedes,
and still no new moon rises.
An isolate figure, you pull
your sweater closer, tighter,
accusing the past, accusing the future

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that insists, year by slow year,
"Love loves itself! Loves nothing else!"
But you can't go back on our pact,
the body's bargain with itself.
Now nothing can save you
unless I do, the past rushing
to fill the future's narrows.
Thirty years. You've paid the price.
Or I will. Because today
I saw something remarkable:
a cloud in the shape of a woman,
a woman in the shape of a cloud,
form coupling with fluid
loveliness, moving and restless.
Soon you'll be myth, a cloud
floating in a sea of blue,
artfully drifting nowhere
I can imagine, what's known, what's earthly,
of no importance whatsoever
in the life that follows this one.

Susan Lasher

NARCISSUS

How strange it must be to find yourself,
finally, by the side of a road with yourself

and your hands, not knowing quite what to make
of it—whether to stick out a thumb for a ride, to make

a small saving gesture, or to clap them together
just for the noise, not that the leaves together

with the wind aren't noise. If it seemed that a shout
or an obvious birdcall would get a response, a shout

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maybe, or someone coming over the hill as if to a lover
at a predetermined hour, you'd play the part of a lover

happily, for a friend, in exchange. A part of you—
stranded alone on the desolate highway you

thought you knew—longs for it: the embrace or the word
turning its face toward you, as if for a word

of encouragement, or a kiss. But another
part simply shuns the distraction of another,

someone undoubtedly stupid or ugly, or just younger,
inexperienced. It's time to get serious. When you were younger

there was some fun in the garage—the old looking-
glass and those antique rattles—but now you are looking

at a long wait without diversion. You won't mind
the change, the chance to know your own mind,

to bloom and wither and bloom, to form
a ghost like a spokeless wheel, a degenerate form.

Daniel Wolff

All down, drowned and wasted
—breathing beneath the empty bottle—
I saw your face, like a piece of paper pasted
against the back of the night. The throttle
of the factory across the street
remanufactures the opening bars
to a tune we now know ends in deceit.
Outside the upstairs window, stars

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whose names I'll never have time to learn
do what they were born to do.
They burn, that is. Expand and burn.
Me, too, love—thinking of You,
waiting for sleep, singing this song.
How beautiful breaks the burdened hour! And wrong.

Martha Hollander

OGATA KŌRIN ON HIS FIELD OF IRISES

Kyoto, c. 1701

Neither you nor I would imagine gardens
like this, but my tacit brush
sees differently. On the
folding screen that will invent a fresh young room
with the stern economy
of a knife, there arises
a company of irises and sweeping
blades of leaf. They explode from
gold ground (not earth but ether,
that sumptuous nothingness which the flat world
so disrupts) as if growing
miraculously from sand.
Descending in a skittish diagonal
they stumble a bit, but then
it's you who must be stumbling
in this burning gold envelope of summer.
Your head lolls along with the
plushy tip of each flower
as if you had laced their scent with your *sake.*
Now we both know they might be
calligraphy after all,
delicious ideograms in just two styles
of purple, and the poem
encoded in their nodding
petals will speak no louder than a whisper.

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Three homesick gentlemen stopped
to weep at the eight-fold bridge
overgrown with irises. Inspired by grief,
they composed an acrostic
lament on the syllables
of iris, more a sigh than a word, really,
in pale English: to the left
all disappears off the edge
only to start again, in the following
panel, with a few opaque
stalks, like a voice rising in
gentle inquiry as it murmurs *iris.*
The garrulous right-hand screen,
though, whose chatter of blossoms
peaks and ebbs as they scallop across the air
with the eager precision
of architectural bays,
will only answer with *kakitsubata*:
the drawn-out stutter of sobs
like those of the courtiers,
choking with sentiment and poetizing,
who cried until their lunch of
dried rice was dampened with tears.

I paint, naturally, for money. What can
summon all this eloquent
growth as urgently as gain?
On the other hand, you might say that I paint
money itself, that the gold
medium where nature springs
is every coin ever coveted, now ground
to powder and sprinkled on
the waiting screen, now warming
and at last melting happily in the sun.
Wealth, like a rare essence, can
flower from the minimal.
Soothing the rich, my resonant irises
are still richer themselves: for
look how simply they bestow
a lush nostalgia on the chamber where you
make love, make tea, give or take

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counsel! Real privilege is
what we mean by art, where the satisfaction
you seek effortlessly bears
you up with the elegant
starkness of purple, green, gold. Each unadorned
leaf startles with intent, like
a woman's bright wrist and knee
parting her kimono as she leans forward
to hand me a new iris
of my own. Tearing apart
the petals I observe once more how painting
reduces truth. What we make
from nothing need only be
enough for recognition: the audacious
colors conceived on precious
metal, no eight-fold bridge, no
time, place, tears. These are already among your
luxurious possessions
which, in the old days, were quite
understood—and how I'd welcome a signal
from the lean past in these hot,
bedizened days, from what our
weak emperors have lost! Here, only here, is
the flower of that court, with
its pleasure and clarity
and with its sorrowing gentlemen poets,
a material world of
things left glowingly unsaid.

Jeffery Donaldson

NEARING THE GATE OF HORN

Orpheus, do I behave? appearing
behind you once (twice perhaps?) each month, one
of the occasional walk-ons hired
for that last closet-drama you put on

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in your sleep—a pastiche of unfinished
parts and some scenery—only someone
you toss off before coming to: surely
more relaxed? at ease? my needing always

to be, now more your business than my own . . .
I forget myself, thanks for having me,
though only as much of me as you might
care to muse upon, as we bear ahead

along this uneven path you parcel
out to us, in short lengths fit to measure.
Where the field, giving way, sways awkwardly
like a rope bridge over that cloudy drop

you wouldn't dream of, we move slowly on
into the daylight hours above us:
morning where you wake alone, its colors
beginning—the simple dye leaked into

an unrippled sky, calm as lake water,
stirring nothing but a school of timid
stars that swims quietly away from it
to the safer deep; finally your room

as well cleared for the weaker outposts
of daylight, the little that gets ahead
of itself, the familiar advances
you once rose to and made so much of, now

your being alive there, at last only
another part of what's ordinary.
Washed, and dressed, a moment of just sitting
as the room brightens, you take leave of me.

Wake up! Did you really think I would go
so far? Granted, this way's uncertain,
making the odd appearance, a figment
of someone else's imagination,

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though at least here I can try to manage,
still, something of what I believe once passed
for living: beginning with this landscape
I keep coming to and turning back from—

the least of what's needed—a kind of path,
and any number of down-to-earth stones
for footing, a siding of meadow grass
with, just here and there, a little something

for me to look at on the way: a pool
of rainwater, the odd bird, or a few
day-lilies beside themselves; the weather
at loose ends, and the light, tainted and yet

unspared, served up in generous treefulls
on the grade; all given, like one-sided
collapsible stage-flats that come and go
(don't make a scene!), benefit of the doubt.

David Shapiro

THE QUEEN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

I.

She was—an extraordinary
beauty, her skull
a reliquary box
carved with an ancient martyrdom

(went to school, you know, with
Thomas
Beckett Fotherington Hayes (who
later played center for the In-
diana Stars of the old
Intercontinental League)); she

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had an Assyrian build:
muscled torso, head
like a bird's, legs
and gait of a lioness;
her eyes were

colored paste and gold
opaquely smol-
dering; she wore
a permanent
sultrily determined glare
(and was

no stranger to the playing
field herself in younger days
before
her mother looked askance
and said

it was after all bad
form for a lady
of breeding, raised
to raise funds at museum teas
and inherit beachfront properties
to go
about in muddy

underpants (oh
Blondie! I could make
such sandwiches
from
your visions of the world!))).

II.

Cold, implacable, regal, sere
(and withal, fragrant
as a Wisconsin milking), she
demanded to be loved
with not the mere-

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ly tender considerations
of a plain and poetic

uxory but with
the refinements of
a raging
and carnivorous regard.

In lust she was all
stone surfaces, flanks
of a temple guardian of Nimrud
with a horse's rump
and the great
stone beard of a sage; her

kisses broke my teeth,
blood flowed on
my face and on my neck,
down the muscles of my
supplicating arms; my

broken fingers stroked
the relieved, the reit-
erant
profiles of sphinxes and beaked
gods that scarred
her wonderful wide flesh.
But don't

mistake me, she was
a Christian, all right,
even if it showed
how her forebears paid the rent
(I've seen
her softball trophies so I know);
and she was full of charity
and white as Pepsodent:

It was not her fault

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if the pagans
would
make her a goddess:

In the tough world of
charitable works there is
only so much
to go around.

Kay Ryan

PERIPHERY

Unlike igneous
crystal-studded
porphyry, famous
since the Egyptian
basin business,
periphery is no
one substance,
but the edges
of anything.
Fountains, for instance,
have a periphery at
some distance
from the spray.
On nice days
idle people
circle all the way
around the central
spout. They
do not get wet.
They do not get hot.
If they bring a bottle
they get kicked out, but

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generally things are mild
and tolerant at peripheries.
People bring bread the
pigeons eat greedily.

Robert Bensen

STANDING BY

Cutting inland, in earshot of the rustling sea,
stars making an exquisite multitude of souls
and the road a white bevel around this oval island,
we three tipsy citizens at the rim of the known world
spotted in the beam of our sole surviving flashlight
an impromptu floor show, starring a hermit crab curled
like a beckoning finger in his whelk suit
and one dead tree frog spread like a compass.
The frog was only one or two cars' passing away
from granulating into the sandy pavement.
The crab worked his polished claws into every tuck,
and for so little—for a morsel
of whatever kept the frog clinging to his branch
after he dropped out of the night and its chorus.
One of us recoiled from that dusty circle of light
and led the rest out into the omnivorous dark,
where what went on, went on in the low murmur
carried seaward by the breeze.

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Harold Brodkey

A PARTISAN'S VIEW OF WORLD PEACE

Let me begin by asking you to consider with me, briefly, one question first. Let us imagine that war has been banished from the globe by some stroke or force of fire and inspiration—would that peace silence tribal warfare? I assume that in a peaceful world, encroachments on so-called primitive territories would have stopped and tribes would have survived. I would assume primitive peoples would have territories assigned to them, areas, reservations. I pause at the question of whether they should have hospitals as well—ought their ways of life and sickness and death be respected? Between people of different civilizations what should the laws of mutual contact be? How ought such laws be policed in a world that has turned its back on the measurement of power that war is?

This subject has been treated in science fiction, in anthropology, in structuralist discourse, in various novels. And it has occurred historically and been much written about. It continues to occur as we speak. It is happening in Israel and in Nicaragua—the Miskito Indians—in Guatemala, as well, and in Poland and Afghanistan. It may be the question which as the ground of analogy lies at the heart of darkness.

Let me play now for a moment with the idea of a simplistic answer. It is human to like such answers best. A simplistic answer, like an ad, indicates, without honesty, *intention* and improvement; and the intention may be Marxist or democratic or commercial and merely friendly but consoling. And the brave are supposed to be clear-eyed and to sidestep this and to be real and to live with the nightmare of practical reason.

In *Tarzan of the Apes*, the central assumption and thing I loved the most, was the idea of being an unaccommodated animal, an ape-child, or rather, a child among apes. The confusion then of superiorities and inferiorities, the confusion of gifts and possibilities, and the goodness and truth of all intentions and of the bonding, the truth and unalterability, the absence of treachery in the bonds; and Tarzan's being the leader, the chief policeman of the peace of the jungle, and his being a brother *and* a superior mind: what I loved best was factually, zoologically what was most untrue, most simplistic.

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In real life, in real time, animal behaviorists tell us, in real moments a child would be sodomized among the apes—if it lived; how else could they test or locate the gender and friendly or unfriendly character of the albino mutant? A species defines itself by its sexual behavior among the examples of itself, male and female. What the apes do to each other they will do to the child. And the child, if it survives, will be treated as older than it would be among humans because of the disparity in its size to that of apes: and how would you compare maturity between the two species? The child would have been disciplined to walk and sit and to eat and feel and think like an ape—what other kind of care and interest can a group of apes possibly show to a creature in its midst? If the child still survived and grew to be larger than the apes, what would he know? He would not have been allowed to develop outside the cultural reality of the apes, and he might or might not have been grateful—or rebellious and vindictive and suspicious and dangerous later, if he survived and was able to have his way.

This is real time we are talking about, not aesthetic time. Words and ideas refer to real time, actual time, ordinary time, moment by moment, and to people and creatures living in that time moment by moment.

Words and ideas refer as well to the foreshortened time (and vision) of thought and argument where nothing is real except argument and the synopsized and perhaps confused sense of consequences and of the future that argument contains.

But, Jesus how I like the lie, the other truth, the fantasy of Tarzan, the simplicity of it.

In civilized discourse, we Americans, when we say *world peace*, what are we talking about in terms of real time? Unalterable armistice between Russia and us?

A worldwide federation of socialist states under the leadership of a Gandhi figure, a Mahatma Gandhi figure?

After all, Islam, if it does not become socialist, presents the problem of a culture having no cultural distaste whatsoever for war.

One perhaps ought then ask what peaceful socialist states do we have. Sweden, of course. And then? Africa presents us with Ethiopia. Asia with Cambodia. Do we treat these as primitive areas? If we mean by world peace a connected program of truces, a global armi-

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stice, a true lessening of the evil that violence is, it can be arranged only if the government of Ethiopia is altered, a socialist or Marxist government.

And we have South Africa and Chile and San Salvador. The latter two are not at the moment expansionist and represent a different problem, actually.

Still, *world peace*, the phrase, the reality it refers to, suggests a world of states organized internally along similar lines so that we can assume that the current Cold War, God help us, is a step toward what is meant by *world peace.*

Do history and conscience permit us any kind of distanced view of these matters for long? It seems not. But if we do not take some sort of distance, the control of opinion that springs up in the immediacy of conscience and consoling one's conscience, "the hysteric gratification" as Roland Barthes calls it, of closed discourse, the ways it confers status and even omniscience on statements, will perhaps lead us into actions worthless for purposes of individual and international peace.

It seems clear now that modern war and revolution, whether in Ethiopia and Somalia and Chad and Cambodia, Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia earlier, or Poland now, and in Israel and in South Africa cannot stop short of attempted genocide. The weight of doctrine and the pressure of the human thing work toward a peaceful solution, a peaceful organization, which means a complete organization. And that now orders the events of carnage so that they move toward dangerous solutions to which we must not become inured and for which, except for specialists in guilt and reorganization of the world, we are in every detail unprepared. Simply and clearly, the modern world is evil.

History tells us that carnage will proceed along the lines of ability. Historically, very few states, and those only for a short time, have practiced any disciplined limitation of their abilities to destroy and rule.

We have in the West the historical examples of the *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Britannica* to represent limited carnage.

The *Pax Romana* generally avoided genocide but was culturally and ecologically meddlesome. The peace it brought was limited internally by the power of its armies and that power's careless exercise of further power and by the corruption that followed on the unmitigated primacy of the emperor's will when once he gained control of the armies if he could.

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The emperor's will, more often than not, went out of control at his and later her human realization of such power: this has been named *The Imperial Madness*. Corruption in judgement was proportionate to the extent of imperial power.

The *Pax Romana* functioned off and on for perhaps two hundred years. The *Pax Britannica* a hundred. They are separated by seventeen hundred years of no stable peace in the West at all.

Peace historically has followed on the will of the dominant power. In the modern world, historical precedent may not matter. Henry Adams said that history *broke* in the year 1900, and it is conceivable that in any number of still approximately inconceivable ways he was right.

The *Pax Britannica* was effective and often in certain ways beneficent but no body of people ever opted for it at the expense of their own independence however bloody and poor that independence was or might prove to be in the future. I have no idea *what* we are supposed to make of that except that I suppose peace didn't seem beneficent to those who experienced it as imposed and, therefore, as conferring an inferiority, a tribal reservation sort of thing on them.

It was not a world peace. In Europe, there were wars carried out by the Prussians, and there was internal fighting in Italy, and external and internal fighting in Austro-Hungary; there was a Serbian uprising supported by Russia against the Turks; and there was the Crimean War; and we had our Civil War which was the world's largest war, or the largest in modern history until then. We preferred the murders of the war to British mediation which would have almost certainly supported slavery. Still, those European wars and our Civil Wars and the wars I have not mentioned from that period became world conflicts in the hundred years the British oversaw peace between the time of Waterloo and the fall of Napoleon in 1815 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the eruption of the immense butcheries in our century.

We have not chosen as a nation to establish a *Pax Americana*; or if we have, it is a very halting form of it defined as halting the spread, country by country, of communist governments; recently, Reagan added a clause stating our distaste for right-wing despots as well which indicates some progress ideologically on the part of the American polity; but in real time refers only to our not giving our client despots support for their regimes in their internal affairs. Until now, our

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client dictators have not, on the whole, committed aggression which, historically, means they have not been trespassers against peace.

As you all know, such American peace is a divisive issue among Americans. This issue divides the country as perhaps no other issue does at the moment. For one thing, we do not offer any systematic program of public morality that proposes so clearly the welfare of people to the hopeful extent that Marxism and its variations do.

Another way of saying this is that we cannot, at this stage of our history, live, as Americans, without being partisans of many of the intentions of Marxism and some of its social analyses—we do not see hope in lesser programs.

But the intentions of Marxism forbid a Marxist state of the sorts we have seen so far, just as, in another but related sense, the intentions of the Talmudic Judaism forbid a territorial Jewish state of the real sort that has come into existence in real moments; and so sadness comes because of the relation of ideal to real time.

I am not condemning Israel or lauding it. I am arguing about the relation of idea and morality to territorial states.

The complexities of American reality—and conscience—have shown us again and again in the last forty years that we do not have a military tradition or the political or economic or moral and *social* structures that can support and carry off policing actions, while the life of this most peculiar nation of ours continues as if we had any life at all here when we are not at peace. We fall apart politically with our own corruptions and our complex nature as a government and as a perpetual social experiment, when the nation tries to continue to exist politically on top of the shaky underpinning of heroic deaths in what is proposed as a limited military action. We can fall apart politically with corruption and the rest of it and manage to hold together in major wars but not in the others; and it is historically clear that we do not recover from our wars. Vietnam destroyed the liberal democratic movement in our country. We have no culture to survive the uproars and breakages of large-scale historical events. We are a political culture, and perhaps we are only a political culture. So our policing efforts turn under the force of politics and of an inadequate army and a not very inspired officer corps into genuine wars although not worldwide ones; and they require more national attention, and they bring on more dislocation and more complete national mobilization than England carried out during the Napoleonic Wars.

And our small wars have not proved to be genocidal, but they

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have been extremely class-biased, and they have failed to avoid genocidal implications.

This may, or may not, be the fault of our opponents and of the ways they wage war and of their ability to wage war in that way, without concern for civilian populations because of the vitality for them, as they fight, of ideal notions and absolute doctrines rather than any direct human concern coming first as with us in our confused simplicities and sophistications.

If you and I say now that we must write and organize and march and protest, we are faced with problems having to do with political program and the purposes of governments and the sophisticated realities in real time of what is actually being proposed and done when we write and organize, march and protest. Mostly, we do not and cannot know what we are saying in the world-context that technology has created for us and in which we live and in terms of which we cannot yet speak or think clearly or impressively. We fight our peculiar wars for a number of reasons, one of which, an important one, is that we do not want to take a cynical responsibility for history.

Peace movements, at least since the Christianization of the Roman throne in the time of Constantine, have, like carnage, operated according to their abilities, and have most often included internal carnage and retirement to an agricultural countryside. This was true in the Eastern Roman Empire which survived until the time Columbus found the New World, and it was true in England, and now it is true for us.

This definition of our present situation is not subject to final argument. It is not reducible to fact or truism. It is observed and felt, seen and summed up from various distances of abstraction. And this clash of distances in modes of thought tends to become a clash of mottos in which a great deal of feeling and a great deal of concern is invested.

This concern is a concern for the future, and I believe that this concern in its formulations *is* historically new. And, politically, we are a new sort of state, in terms of suffrage, governmental structures, and the complete subordination of all cultural and moral structures to political action. The possibilities of so much newness are, at once, vertiginous and transparent which is to say unpredictable and unchartable. If we rise in armed rebellion in the name of peace to show our sincerity and to act on our beliefs, it is in the nature of political act troubled by the reality of the spectrum of violence that has histor-

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ically shifted to the point that the reality of any argument to the end point of violence defeats us whatever we do.

It would seem now that any violence at all defeats us.

In our pride and need as citizens and folk just trying to get along and as separate egos, we use language as an absolute, absolute in itself and not only capable but actually representing actual truths—the ones in real minutes. Since so much depends on speech it has become a criminal act to forget that speech is a mode of argument. *Peace* must mean something in real moments. Any program toward it must examine the real moments likely to occur in the progress of fighting or working for that program. The British and the Romans, so far as we can judge now, never took language as an absolute in their political arguments, military planning, or in their major literature. But we when we speak tend to treat everything as the early stages of the development of a revealed truth, a final and exact truth, a religion, not entirely rational but universal and unarguable.

Wittgenstein argues that only biological facts of an historical sort can be used for generalizations and overall formulations about people and history. And ideal statements and statements of ideals are not useful: they cannot be used as *premises* without the argument being nonsense from its inception.

Poor humankind. It is like children being told not to stuff beans up their noses. False generalizations have been the fate of the century.

I say that disarmament—and an actual peace of any sort—can exist now only with*out* ideals, only without the use of *any* notion of the ideal, and only with the recognition of the political inevitability of *the arguability* of everything.

And once that is agreed to, it can be agreed that nonviolence is the only conceivable mode of *hopeful* argument. Nonviolence is the only nondoomsday, nongenocidal argument. But is nonviolence workable?

To be essentially a believer in nonviolence or a pacifist, in real time, is to be part of a party of believers that has factions and wings. The argument over the kinds and degrees of force to back up the nonquietist elements among peacelovers is a serious one. The connections between forces in a world culture, a world context make it clear that our treatment of one another and of nearly everything—

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even minor objects of waste—threatens everything. I say everything has become overtly political in our system, so much so that even to consider nonviolence as politically useful assails the left and the right. And does not mark a center.

But every time we are goaded to violence by the violence or chicanery and idealism and pretensions of others, any time a situation rises to a degree of real emergency, whenever we attempt to impose an ideal in its completeness on others, when any of us attempt to survive at all costs, we raise questions of the survival of the world and of the possibility of any kind of peace.

This is not to suggest an ideal society of equalitarian humilities but only to suggest the extreme fragility of structures of peace.

We may be able to simplify our weaponry so that life can continue. We may be able to bring some kind of order to society, unideal but widespread, and to groups of societies that will partly work peaceably, but that order represents a very broad assault on society as it is now constituted.

Socialism would seem to be part of what would result but not as a coercive ideal. It is more likely to arise from our system of pragmatic lurches and whatevers than from an idea-ridden system. I believe this very strongly. What we would have would not be like any religion heretofore existent, but it would have religious and pious aspects and aspects of belief and of faith. This kind of movement is much assailed and hated—hated in return because for many of us, without perhaps permitting ourselves hatred, we yet hate this or that quality of this society and of the other ones we know of, and we may hate violence as lovers hate a love they wish would stop and a dependence they wish would end.

Is it worthwhile to hold to such a troubling and unpeaceful course in pursuit of an unideal and fragile and merely human peace? In dealing with what does not exist now you can make pronouncements but you cannot really *know*.

An individual can attempt to move society by personal example —one aspect of which is called *style*—and by direct political action, by direct economic action, by emotional action, by personal ties, by the propagation of ideas and the defense or extension of culture and sometimes of beliefs, by supporting people and institutions through whose agency things are done or thought or argued and other things are not done so that you applaud, or only half-applaud, their program; but through the agency of that program and those people, their existence and actions—and arguments—in the real world, your hope

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concerning meritorious and worthwhile endeavors are embodied in real, or far from ideal, but very profound, real and profound, profoundly *worthwhile* sets of actions of some overt kind of which you and I are indirectly part by means of our support in whatever ways we manifest that support.

In life we are taught grammar. We are told what it is. It is what someone who tells us about it says it is if they have power, if they are functioning well, and if we are within their sphere of influence and if others are. And then we learn further it is what experience teaches us it is in the light of other powers. We may not always admit this but we practice it. And the success of living examples with the peculiar webbing of powers and attachments to various kinds of correctness prepares us for notions of ideal argument which have little to do with the new politics which I am adumbrating here and which are in existence although in a somewhat formless way. What are we to do?

Grammar is broadly defined as the underlying structures of a language that inform utterance in such a way, that shape it so, that it can convey meaning. That signifies that one intends to say something that others can comprehend some of, enough of, that a third party would judge meaning to have been conveyed. But the third party has to be a human being, or a programmed computer: the whole process is subject to human error. And coercion. And that is to say, human politics.

And human agency.

I believe one is often guilty by agency in this manner just as one is sometimes morally better off by agency in this manner.

By language—rather than by money and force—since the time of the Greeks and Romans—by means of public argument a degree of civilization, not yet peaceful, not yet independent of overt or hidden slavery, has evolved.

If meaning is consistently and inescapably political then we cannot claim the dignity of speaking for God or mind or man. We can speak for a degree of civilization which in this country always has meant and still means a political civilization.

And the instability of footing of such political speech is based on the reality of force and repression of one kind and another and by the reality of false arguments which stabilize all discussion by defining unideal ideals as ideal; that is to say, ideals-at-the-moment, right now, in this or that emergency as we live. I do not see the possibility

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of Utopia. When I think how much policing I would need to be suitable for a Utopia, when I think further how much policing *you* would need, I throw up my hands.

Language parallels the operations of force and politics because it is a social matter. Sensible discourse begins with clarity of vision and is based on courtesy based, in turn, on further clarity of vision having to do with honesty and the ability to admit defeat, always temporary, on a great many levels. Far and away the greatest enemy of humankind is any—any—assertion of omniscience.

Events grow from events and especially from the events of discourse in the zigs and zags of the consequences of argument. In our world such events zag with despairing completeness into evil. This calls for a grammar of political discourse, for yet another form of grammar, the very premises of which remain unestablished although we all feel the reality of their truth. Pure, unselfconscious actions and statements are of the greatest uselessness and are, in the real world, actually crimes. Language propels responsibility, and responsibility is inseparable from language. Frivolity as itself or masked in the pretense of serious purpose shows in inadequate and often wrong language. I am not proposing any sort of perfection. I am saying that language, and language as action, is never fully responsible, it can never be unarguably responsible, but it must attempt to be it.

By our right to claim that whoever is talking to us is talking nonsense, we, as listeners, unwittingly define lawfulness in speech as a precedent and as an example. To study and assert the just claims and rights of speech is an act of peace, and a major one. Comprehensible grammar can always be attacked as incoherent or as unsuitable or as uneducated or as educated hypocrisy, as lawless statement, meaningless, as bourgeois or as propagandistic the other way, whatever.

What determines sense? Economics? Politics? Birth? Coercion? Emily Dickinson writes in units separated by dashes. Repunctuate Emily Dickinson, and you alter her meaning—go and see for yourselves—you harm and, in many cases, so mutilate the poem as to make it be without sense. To learn and know what meaning is, and meanings are, and how they are political—and *not* timeless—is what education is meant to be about and is why we admire and study certain writers and certain performers. My sense of grammar and of expression was influenced by Billie Holiday more than by Wallace Stevens.

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We have the experience of learning a broad-based version of English at some point in our school lives to suggest to us what it might be like to be part of a larger community that experiences peace inwardly and is united against outward barbarisms, solecisms of force—but this reality-of-language must be further looked at before it is used too firmly as a base for what we do next.

What our generations do is they alter grammar and learn a generational grammar, just as writers learn various kinds of writerly grammars, and politicians learn political grammars and modes of speech and methods of seduction and of negotiation and of argument; and then they proceed to experiment with the world and the shape and organization of the world.

In a highly politicized world-context, certain statements take on a particular note of revelation which one might describe as preceding a change in law and culture which, however, can never be ideal unless you change, by coercion, people's sense of themselves and change, thereby, the actual meaning of the word ideal. The thing must exist before the word truly changes.

You can certainly attempt something which has not been seen but that ought to represent a sensible limitation of attempt as well. What-is-there, the what-is-there now must gain in force and importance until we are truly human. The loathesomeness of systems leads us to deride all systems or most and their languages and language-beliefs, the encoding of what is correct and essential to those systems which lies within the language of those systems. This is American and dangerous and anarchic and very dear to me; and perhaps there is some justice and some sense in it.

Because of the role of language in these matters and because of the requirements of knowledge about events that must be met, requirements of adequate or inadequate but at least well-reported information, it seems to me that at this impasse, if we are not Catholic or Pentecostal or Orthodox Jew and bound to uphold the inevitability of Armaggedon and the end of the world, and the desirability of an immediate end, if we are to avoid the impasse, we must band together with others and live in certain ways.

Within any reality experienced as largely *political*, by which I mean nonabsolutist and open to competition and argument under some form of common law, law held in common *despite* divergences of belief, law in some system of altruism and self-interest, then, sometimes insufferably, nearly everything *moral* is to be considered a way of working toward peace: personal honesty, attempting to rear chil-

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dren to be upright, hard work, care in one's use of language, altruism: and morality's various projects, feeding and sheltering the helpless, ecology, opposing stupidity and waste, work toward peace as well—and clearly rests on the first elements and cannot proceed without them—but life is so unclear that we must admit that immorality works toward peace too, and not only the peace of entropy, although that too is part of its nihilistic appeal; but the wicked extension of the American empire, for instance, works for peace as does the wicked extension of the empire of the Eastern Bloc. I believe we are far closer to the intentions of Marxism and some of its realities in this beset and troubled country than any socialist state is, although we are infinitely farther from it, or less close to it I should say, than we were twenty years ago.

I propose to correct Marx by proposing a program of imperfection. Marx, in a sense, continued the processes of thought that sprang from the notion of the Christian state in the time of Constantine, the notion of a moral state conceived as a world state, a successor to the Jews' idea of a moral state, to their idea of what a state must be and do to be considered moral, to hold God's favor. Part of what is so flawed in Marx is that as someone beginning a process of thought he was, in order to be comprehensible, rooted in the past he sought to replace.

He modified the notion of public morality that sprang into the world in the eighteenth century here and in France. We are told that Marx is descended from Hegel, but I find it more useful to think of him as a descendant and rival to Voltaire and Napoléon. I would say the line of political philosophers goes from Voltaire to Jefferson to Lincoln on one side; and from Voltaire to Napoléon and Marx on the other. A third line arises with Tolstoy and Gandhi from the same roots in Voltaire and Napoléon, and from the same need to correct them and rival them and to correct Marx and Jefferson and Lincoln. In our own moment in history, in our current predicaments with language and reality, and peace, when public conscience, public power, public intelligence have become mass phenomena powerfully enough, it seems to each generation now that the world can be modern finally if the right leaders and right programs arise and are followed.

In this program involving language and information, imperfection and thought and study, at the moment, and for some time now, in most areas of existence having to do with day-by-day realities in these matters of language and peace and survival, William Shawn of

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The New Yorker has been the interpreter and furtherer of the line of argument of Gandhi and Tolstoy for me.

And I follow, often unwillingly, Jonathan Schell's prescripts and arguments concerning peace.

For me, they serve as people whose efforts I support, who are agents of my concern for the world.

I know I am always partly in error. And so is everyone. I choose their degree of error for its merit and to balance my own imbalances in regard to my own errors. (I am more resigned to the inevitability of evil than either of them. They have an optimism that ameliorates my darkness.)

Is this a way to gain individual peace or satisfaction or a sense of duty done in this world in this area?

I find it to be so.

It is an antipathy to being evangelical that moderates my language here.

Coming in

PARTISAN REVIEW

- Pearl K. Bell: Fiction in Review
- William Phillips on Joseph Brodsky
- Peter Brooks on Psychoanalysis and Criticism
- Enrique Krauze on Mexico
- Barbara Rose on Jackson Pollock
- Conor Cruise O'Brien: Philanthropy and Culture in America
- Nathan Glazer on Life in the Bronx
- Barbara Probst Solomon on Marguerite Duras
- Poetry by W. S. Merwin and Allen Ginsberg
- Dennis Wrong on the Marxist Enterprise
- Raymond Aron: *A Memoir*
- Steven Marcus on Ernest Hemingway
- Fiction by Michel Tournier

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Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, and Christopher Lydon

ROBERT PENN WARREN

CL: What do you think about the United States having a poet laureate?
DW: I think generally the idea of a poet laureate has been treated with some slight ridicule because it's such an elevated-sounding title. On the other hand, it's an old tradition to elevate a poet to represent the tribe or the nation or whatever. And I think it automatically ceases to be in any way amusing when Warren is nominated. In other words, you know there's no way that that can be a funny idea. It's a crowning achievement for a poet whose achievement parallels almost, I would say, in terms of its revelation and in terms of its course, something close to that of Hardy and Yeats, in terms of his best writing happening in his old age, the most power happening in his old age. So I think that as the recognition of that—if it is not purely a sort of crowning an aging man with some kind of glory at the end—as the recognition of the achievement itself, of what he has done recently, it's terrific that it has happened, and I can't think of anyone else more deserving of it now.
CL: How would you describe the poetry?
DW: In my particular case, I'm a little cautious about my appreciation of Warren, because I used to feel, when I was much younger, that in a sense the novelist dominated the poetry. I didn't mind the fictional part of it so much, but what I began to recognize, and a lot of other poets recently are quite staggered by, is not only the fecundity and clarity that have emerged but also a tightening of symmetry, a concentration, and a great vigor, I mean a vigor equal to a delight and pride in old age that is really heroic. A clarity has come into the work itself, a sort of elation that has been well-earned.
CL: Seamus, do you want to embellish on that?
SH: Well I think Warren, of poets in America, is a poet who has not broken faith with the historical experience; the matter of American

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historical experience has been a matter of his art, and that is a rare fidelity, and a necessary one in order that poetry make its reality and its authority felt in the *res publica.* And if America is to choose a poet laureate, I don't think it could have chosen better, because Warren's poetry produces history, as well as being a reaction to it. In other words, his ambition was never just literary. Of course, he had literary gifts and literary ironies and contributed a lot to the teaching of literature in this century. But his concern is with the life of the culture, rather than just with his own literary career. I'm not just thinking of the fact that he writes, in this wonderful late flowering, a poem like "Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce." The good thing about Warren's appointment to the laureateship is that among living American poets he is one who has made history part of his subject. He has made responsibility to history and the prophecy of American destiny part of his career. It's a large voice with large poetic responsibilities being shouldered, and I think that it is proper that he is the poet whom the republic honors, because he has done honor to the republic by keeping it in mind in his own work.

CL: What history are you talking about?

SH: For example, the relationship between poet and region which he began with. He was one of the Fugitives. In the beginning as a young poet he, along with others, thought carefully about the relationship between, if you like, a literary career and a communal destiny. He then went on to write—and this is as much a matter of the *pitch* of his voice as the content of his subjects—as if poets and as if poetry had a responsibility for things other than just their own excellence. There is roughage in his poetry, there is subject matter, there is an encounter with the world of prose. There is—just to take that recent long poem—an engagement with the matter of the treatment of the American Indian. It's not done in any kind of sentimental way, this is an historical moment. That poem "Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce" is a narrative which examines responsibility in the past and conscience and looks at the complexity of the nineteenth-century American experience. I also mean that he himself is intent on being equal to history. A lot of poets, nowadays, wilt in the face of that. They go towards a very personal lyric mode. Fair enough; it's an entirely proper response. They feel that their art or their authenticity would somehow be compromised by taking on public matters. But poetry always, from Homer through Dante, has that challenge. And Warren did not refuse the challenge and rose to the occasion in many places. It's the largeness of the voice and the enterprise that I salute, and that I think the appointment salutes.

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CL: Is there a contradiction, in this country, particularly compared to England, between the notion of a tribal voice, and the incredibly multifarious nature of American voices and culture and regions? Does it make sense in a country of this scope to speak of *a* poet as *the* poet laureate?

DW: I think of Warren emblematically now because he himself has written poems that deal a lot with the image of the hawk: the circling hawk, the hawk over a barren or rich landscape. And in a sense he's like an old hawk. You meet him and he has what you see as a sort of fierceness, but he's a beautifully gentle man. In terms of trying to take in the whole image of America with the sort of three hundred-sixty-degree vision that a hawk might have, it's not far, the regions that he deals with are the regions that he knows by heart. And that is, in a sense, epic, deliberately epic—he's from the South, he knows the South, his perimeters are not really vast, he takes on huge subjects. But in a sense he has kept within his own circle always. And in the rootedness of that, in terms of the circling, the distance that he made himself travel, in that emblematic manner he has been trying to see as far as he can see. What is the meaning of the ground that he is above? The validity of that is wonderful in his old age. And it's not a conceited image of "I am a hawk"; it is an image of trying to get above everything, and trying to see what is the range of my vision, and what joy do I feel. In terms of the gift that he has, it's a tribute to his gift when he calls himself a hawk. One thinks of him in that manner. So it's not as though he is the heavy voice of America, the conscience of America, the emblematic America, he's just now a great poet who has kept within really fairly modest limits of personal experience. What Seamus is saying is that you can have these personal limits. I think that's what a great poet has. You have the personal limits of your own experience, but somehow you are capable of making the horizon, the perimeter of that, be part of your experience. So it isn't that you have a huge vision, a beginning epic vision. Instead your vision is out of what you know, out of knowing where you are, where you *come* from. And that has been the strongest thing in Warren: I am from the South, I am part of the conscience of the South, I am part of the guilt of the South. I don't feel any hostility myself--I'm not a Black American—but I don't feel any hostility about reading Warren because I think he's as honest a conscience as you can get about the agrarian situation in the South.

CL: Could you take a crack just at the notion of a tribal poet in a country of this range and contradiction and diversity?

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SH: Well there are two things I would want to say about it. First of all, the suspicious thing first, which has nothing to do with Warren. It's to do with the very institution, at this moment, this particular moment of the imperial theme in America, of a poet laureateship. It's as if the capitol is calling towards it everything that can furbish its image. It's calling conscience towards it, and I would be suspicious of the political motive of this. I don't think any one person is sitting in Washington planning to implicate the best intelligence in a corrupt design. I'm not saying that. Just in some general way, that at this particular moment of American power and profile in the world, and this particular moment on Capitol Hill, a poet, that most ancient of law-givers, that most respected of words, should be kept a very pure power within the *res publica*. Poets should be the alternative government. The poetic intelligence of the country should be the *other* government. My suspicion is that this could be an unconcious attempt to wrong-foot conscience in the other government. Having said that, I think that American poets are eminently suited for poet laureateship. Unlike English poetry, which has usually had an ironical stance towards power, in American poetry, for example Whitman's, there's a big tradition of the poet being the power, a big tradition of visionary writing. One of the difficulties for an American artist, poet, or novelist, one of the challenges, is to raise the breath and project a vision that will include all America. So I think it's natural enough that there should be an American poet laureate. Since Whitman, the great founding father, wanted to be America. Of course, there's another poetry, closer to the skeptical inward mode of English writing which involves the refusal, to some extent, of public vision. It's a different kind of art. But I do think that one tradition of American poetry sponsors the impulse towards public poetry, towards the redemptive voice of conscience, as Derek says.

CL: Would you each give us a taste of the Warren whom you admire?

DW: Well, I'm not selecting an aspect of Warren that I admire, I'm selecting a poem that I thought exemplified what I was saying in terms of the clarity of his vision and its lyric width. And again, if you substitute hawk and airplane, it is a vision from a height, of caribou crossing. And the vision is from a very high distance above the caribous crossing.

Caribou

Far, far southward, the forest is white, not merely
As snow of no blemish, but whiter than ice yet sharing

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The mystic and blue-tinged, tangential moonlight,
Which in unshadowed vastness breathes northward.
Such great space must once
Have been a lake, now, long ages, ice-solid.

Shadows shift from the whiteness of forest, small
As they move on the verge of moon-shaven distance.
They grow clear,
As binoculars find the hairline adjustment.
They seem to drift from the purity of forest.
Single, snow-dusted above, each shadow appears, each
Slowly detached from the white anonymity
Of forest, each hulk
Lurching, each lifted leg leaving a blackness as though
Of a broken snowshoe partly withdrawn. We know
That the beast's foot spreads like a snowshoe to support
That weight, that bench-kneed awkwardness.

The heads heave and sway. It must be with spittle
That jaws are ice-bearded. The shoulders
Lumber on forward, as though only the bones could,
inwardly,
Guess destination. The antlers,
Blunted and awkward, are carved by some primitive
craftsman.

We do not know on what errand they are bent, to
What mission committed. It is a world that
They live in, and it is their life.
They move through the world and breathe destiny.
Their destiny is as bright as crystal, as pure
As a dream of zero. Their destiny
Must resemble happiness even though
They do not know that name.

I lay the binoculars on the lap of the biologist. He
Studies distance. The co-pilot studies a map. He glances at
A compass. At mysterious dials. I drink coffee. Courteously,
The binoculars come back to me.

I have lost the spot. I find only blankness.

But
They must have been going somewhere.

SH: This is a poem which touches some deep part in me personally, but I think it enters into a deep impersonal place of stillness through

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language. I spoke of Warren earlier as an almost epic poet, but the thrill of this particular thing is the lyric, intimate moment. . . .

Tell Me A Story

[A]
Long ago, in Kentucky, I, a boy, stood
By a dirt road, in first dark, and heard
The great geese hoot northward.

I could not see them, there being no moon
And the stars sparse. I heard them.

I did not know what was happening in my heart.

It was the season before the elderberry blooms,
Therefore they were going north.

The sound was passing northward.

[B]
Tell me a story.

In this century, and moment, of mania,
Tell me a story.

Make it a story of great distances, and starlight.

The name of the story will be Time,
But you must not pronounce its name.

Tell me a story of deep delight.

DW: I'm quite friendly with Warren's daughter Rosanna, who is herself a poet. And, I've met the Warrens—Eleanor Clark and Robert Penn Warren—through Rosanna. Seamus and I, we've gone out there and met him. He's a very, very kind man, there's a strength of kindness in him that's wonderful to feel, and a kind of risky nobility in him that's amusing and nice. And he has been quite ill recently. I just wrote a draft of a poem which may be appropriate because of the fact that he has just been honored; although it wasn't written because of the appointment to the poet laureateship, nor was it written for any other reason but perhaps just to please Rosanna maybe, because she's very fond of her father, and I have grown very fond of him. It is called "On the Indian Trail." I didn't know it was going to be a poem about Warren, all I had in my mind was an old man in the middle of a stream, and there was somebody watching

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him, and when I began to write I realized, hey, wait a minute, these two figures are the old poet, Warren, and his daughter on the bank. And it changes into a kind of a friendly tribute to both of them. It is for Eleanor Clark, Robert Penn Warren's wife, who is also a fine writer.

On the Indian Trail

They'd come to one of those creeks where the dragonfly dries
his gauze on dry rock; for a while out of reach
of musket, gunpowder horn, and some tacit arrow,
this young squaw and old settler by some new pines.
I have changed this into a mottled pioneer and his daughter,
so let Red and Rosanna Penn Warren have these lines.
In his eyes she saw such coming distances.
The blue that entered the eyes of Pizarro,
a face whose wrinkles might creak like saddle leather,
and greying hair that was thinning like cirrus,
the rime on the edge of the always retreating sierras,
the guano of hawks. Thin shins of old age
when he washes under his armpits in the brown water,
the sag of his eyes. But the eyes glint
like a kingfisher crossing upstream, and she imagined
the corona of gnats around his powerful skull
like the circular argument of cloistered friars
under the dome of Salamanca. His hand is transparent
and crisp as vellum, the veined, yellowing page.
He came, carrying his things, and again, in the eyes:
a wisdom beyond that of any parent,
and what is the true beginning of beauty: age.

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REPORTS FROM ABROAD

Jacques Pietri

BEIRUT

Have we really understood the true political geography of Lebanon? Have we really understood that in Beirut the West was in the east and the East in the west? The information given by certain media according to whom there were no more "Europeans" in West Beirut is a dream! Are the Czechs, the East Germans, the Bulgarians, the Romanians, and the Russians no longer Europeans? For there were never as many agents from Eastern countries as there have been during the last few months, even if the Soviets show a certain amount of prudence. Not only does Shiite *integrisme* triumph today, it is also and especially the KGB.

To chase the Westerners from a zone of influence they had acquired, and by this fact itself to contribute to the destabilization of the entire Mediterranean, is one of the Soviet objectives and one of the reasons (naturally there are others) for the eleven years of the war in Lebanon.

Fundamentally and politically, the Islamic Djihad is nothing other than a branch of the KGB. The assaults on French and American troops could not have been organized without the logistic support of the powerful secret services, and the most frequently cited were those of the Syrians, Iranians, and . . . Russians.

That is why it doesn't much matter whether one is or is not Christian. If one still believes in the fundamental Western values, in democracy, liberty, tolerance—for others or oneself, it is important to support the Lebanese Christians, if there still is time. Unfortunately, it is a good bet that they will hardly weigh more heavily in the diplomatic balance than did the Sudetenland in its time. The spirit of Munich lives on.

For now, the Westerners have not yet paid the price for their cowardice; the worst is yet to come. And terrorism cannot be eradi-

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cated unless the democracies stop doubting themselves. The Western world must be made aware that even if its value system is not the best, it is in any event the least bad, and that it is worth fighting in order to safeguard it.

In view of the Lebanese crisis, the sum of "stupidities" that have been written in the Western press is bewildering, as though it were a battle between rich and poor, progressives and fascists! No one, it is true, any longer would use the expression that bloomed in 1976, *Islamo-progressive*, since everyone has understood its absurdity.

The origins of the Lebanese war are complex, multiple, equivocal; they don't lend themselves to rational analysis. Nevertheless, at the risk of being too schematic, one can say that this conflict is the result of seven factors: the "congenital" incapacity of the Lebanese to accept the least restraint by the state; the archaic attachment to anti-laical religious values by these same Lebanese; the Palestinian subversion; the Syrian hegemony (Damascus never recognized Lebanon and never had an embassy in Beirut) upheld by the Soviet Union; the rise of Islamic *integrisme*; the procrastination and weakness of the democracies.

At different times, some of these factors have been more important than others. That was how, for example, the first factor cited explains, at the beginning of the war, the weakness of the Lebanese state when faced by the subversion of Palestinian militia, who were better armed than the Lebanese army. Contrary to common opinion, the Syrians have done nothing but throw oil on the fire. The choice made by the United States and France, namely to discharge their responsibilities in favor of the Syrians, in entrusting them to reestablish order, is an historical fraud.

When will we finally understand that the principles of respect for human life, of honoring one's word, of individual liberty, are not the basic values of Islamic *integrisme*? Just like the Inquisition, Islamism has had but one, and only one end: to convert the entire world to its faith.

The only nation to have understood the seriousness of the situation (it is true that it is seated in the front row) is Israel, the only democratic state in the Near East, which, if it were not its own aircraft carrier, already would have been swept away. The historical error of the Lebanese Christians was not to have understood that their only natural allies in that part of the world were the Israelis, not only for political reasons but also for cultural ones.

They have, however, several excuses for committing such an

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error; they are not alone. How severely the Western world condemns Israel for its least mistake, while not reacting when Syria (socialist, to be sure) massacred—according to the most moderate estimates—ten thousand persons in February 1982 in Hama, or when the Druse (also socialists) assassinated 1,500 Christians in September 1983 in the Chouf!

Two weights, two measurements: this seems to have been the rule here. From now on, we must show a bit of consistency; the retreat by France from its allies in Lebanon, about which there is uproar, would be absurd. The French never have run the least risk in the Christian zone; as to the rest—the howitzers and the assaults—they have accepted these risks with a million other Lebanese! . . .

If we refuse to help the only truly enlightened elements in Lebanon, we ought now to take the necessary measures to receive hundreds of thousands of Lebanese refugees fleeing totalitarianism. Among them, there also will be moderate Muslims, numerous in Lebanon, who, too, will be victims of fanaticism. By then, we will have forgotten what Bechir Gemayel said in 1981, when he received a delegation of leftist French radicals: *With France, it is difficult to reveal all the things we share. . . . What long and profound cultural complicity which, for such a long time, has allowed us to plot, in the same discourse, the same language, the course of liberty!*

Translated from the French by Edith Kurzweil

David Twersky

ISRAEL

When it comes to confused thinking about Israel, American intellectuals do not have a monopoly.

For most Israeli intellectuals, the gods never failed: only a small minority embraced the Soviet Union and, significantly, even they were never embraced in return. At most points during Israel's brief history, the great divide was not between the pro-Soviet and the social democratic lefts, but between the social democrats and the right. The great majority of Israeli novelists, poets, and critics always remained somewhere on the left: it was *de rigueur* for the life of the mind.

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The relations between the political and literary elites were governed by surprisingly traditional instincts on both sides: within the [Zionist] "revolution," Amos Oz told me, "there has been a tradition of respect for intellectuals, writers, painters—those who are supposed to be the heirs of the prophets." No writer could pass on a chance to "speak truth to power," especially when power would continue to accept sole responsibility for the truth it would choose to act on; no politician (except for some of Israel's new populist anti-intellectuals) would willingly appear unread and unwashed by the renaissance of Hebrew literature, the spiritual medium of the Zionist revolution.

But respect did not necessarily mean "obedience": the political leaders respected the great writers, but rarely their political advice. Currently, the Labor Party has a unit organizing the literary and artistic communities, and Shimon Peres meets with writers several times a year for "discussion."

There were a few exceptions to the left's dominant position among the intellectual establishment, like the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg, a one-time colleague of Isaac Bashevis Singer's in prewar Warsaw, who ended up on the right. A few other writers, like the poet Nathan Alterman, started out in the labor movement, and embraced the "Greater Israel" idea after the 1967 Six Day War resulted in the capture of the West Bank and Gaza territories—although before that idea had become the sole property of the right. Only a few, like the novelist Moshe Shamir, went the whole "up from communism" route: starting out as a member of the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair, he ended up as a Knesset member of the annexationist right-of-Likud Techiya party.

When Likud finally won in 1977, after half a century of social democratic "hegemony" collapsed on itself, the country's literary, academic, and journalistic elites were against their rule. The idea that a changeover from one large party to the other might be a legitimate feature of democratic culture was scarcely spoken of. This became clear during a 1986 television documentary about Abba Ahimeir, who for a while led a pro-fascist wing of the revisionist rightist Zionists. Yitzhak Ben Aharon, a grand old man of the left, said the violence of the labor movement against the right in the thirties was because fascism could happen [in Israel]. When I phoned Ben Aharon to inquire how he could equate Begin's election victory in 1977 with the rise to power of Mussolini and Hitler, he told me: "There were periods of transition then, too."—As if Begin, for all his objectionable policies,

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could possibly have opened concentration camps for union leaders and Peace Now activists.

During those years, these elites increasingly spoke with the voice of strident oppositionism, laced with the mournful elegiac tones of an aristocracy of light fallen before the forces of darkness. To be sure, Likud rule brought with it policies worth opposing, like the growing West Bank Jewish settlements and the Lebanon war; but it also brought the peace treaty with Egypt.

If not exactly "a herd of independent minds," the differences among Israeli intellectuals were lost in the general anti-annexationist and anti-Lebanon war sentiments of that time. The widespread unanimity on what was to be opposed masked an underlying diversity on how to break out of the political impasse and on an alternative vision of society.

The unanimous rejection of the right's creeping annexation of the territories did not produce automatic agreement as to what a moderate Israeli policy might look like. There were differences over the PLO, and over both tactics and strategies towards the right-tilting orthodox Jews, whose political support remains crucial to a leftward realignment. The more dovish left found it increasingly difficult to agree on a set of positive symbols—national, familial, spiritual—with which the mass of Israelis could identify. There was a growing ambiguity toward the people who had voted Likud and supported the Lebanon war. Finally, under cover of the widespread opposition to that war, extreme anti-army and antinationalist attitudes emerged, though most people continued to see themselves as Zionist, democratic and patriotic.

The left found that it could not maintain a sense of proportion about its usually justified criticisms of Likud policies. For those policies could not be held primarily responsible for the Israel-Arab dispute, which had preceded both the rise of the Likud and the capture of the territories.

Given that Israel should not have settled the West Bank or invaded Lebanon and that the government pursuing those policies had to be opposed, wasn't Arab rejection of Israel's very existence still at the core of the conflict? If Gush Emunim and Ariel Sharon were bad guys, did that make the PLO good guys, or even equally bad ones? For if the PLO's position was as "flexibly rejectionist" as Likud's, not to mention as politically intelligent, we would already be deep in negotiations.

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In their rush to oppose the symbols and myths of the right, many intellectuals chose to abandon the middle ground. And the right, which took over the old left's settlement strategy and symbols, only to apply them with a vengeance in the West Bank, also captured the fallen flags of "security" and "nationalism."

When Meir Kahane's radical right Kach party began to show increased support in the polls last year, the political establishment rushed to declare a year of "Education Toward Democracy" in order to encourage tolerance towards Israeli Arabs and a deeper appreciation of democratic values and institutions. But many on the left saw this campaign as an excuse to order a retreat from the central value of Zionist nationalism which was a core commitment for the old labor movement. Rather than refute Kahane's charge that the Jewish and democratic aspects of the state were incompatible, many on the left, including Meron Benvenisti, preferred to agree. But whereas Kahane argued for the abolition of the pluralistic democracy, Benvenisti argued that democratic commitment required an end to the Jewish/Zionist character of the state.

The tendency to blame Israel also served as a global passport to progressive culture. Like many Western intellectuals, Israeli leftists were no longer able to share a belief in socialism, and were blocked by both Israel's preoccupation with self and dependence on America from linking up with "progressive" Western circles around anti-American nuclear and human rights issues. But progressive Israeli intellectuals could still feel like citizens of the world by giving expression to the late twentieth-century version of the white man's burden. If Western liberals see the West as fundamentally guilty of original sins against nomadic and "third world" peoples, Israel could be seen as having been conceived in sin against the Palestinians.

The unanimous opposition to Likud broke up over the fractious debate on entering the national unity government. It led to the breakdown of the intellectual consensus, and the re-emergence of its natural dazzling diversity made literary life during the past two years so interesting.

Given the diminutive size of the Israeli literary marketplace, many writers also have regular newspaper columns on public affairs. This means that the new debates are conducted in the dailies—rather than in the shadows of the literary and political monthlies and quarterlies alone.

In 1983, during the worst year of the intellectuals' alienation—the year after Sabra and Shatilla and the murder of a Peace Now ac-

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tivist, Emil Grunzweig—A. B. Yehoshua warned of the deleterious effects of the politicization of literature. "As the conflicts between the two main concepts of Israeli identity develop, literature will become a major weapon in this fight. This will destroy the subtleties, the deep areas in which the varieties of human experience can be expressed . . . [literature] is in danger of becoming a fight between the good guys and the bad." But Yehoshua was more right than he imagined: not only the literary, but also the political imagination lost its subtle shadings, its depth and variety.

When the 1984 elections resulted in a hung Knesset, four writers —A. B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, Hayyim Guri and S. Yizhar—published a call to their comrades in the dovish left to join the national unity government they saw emerging. "We pleaded for the coalition with the Likud," Oz recalled, in order "to opt for the lesser of the many evils. At the time, I felt that either a narrow Labor-led coalition depending on the Knesset support of the communist party, or a right-wing coalition leaning on [extreme right-wing Rabbi Meir] Kahane, would be an illegitimate government in the eyes of half the nation."

Before issuing it, Oz and Yehoshua cleared their call with some of the people to whom it was addressed. But the stubborn refusal of the Mapam party to sit with Likud paved the way for the creation of a bloc of ten Knesset members in the opposition democratic left. Mapam, the Movement for Citizen's Rights and Peace, and the larger part of the Peace Now leadership remained in opposition when Shimon Peres took Labor into the semi-power of the national unity government—and by its desertion so weakened the Labor bloc as to force it to accept the "rotation" agreement to surrender the prime minister's office to Likud this fall.

The writers' call provoked a counter call published by a group of poets and critics accusing the Oz group of betraying the left. This second group retained the habits of mind and political instincts which had steeled them against the seven Likud years, but which were inadequate and inappropriate to the new situation. (For one thing, they were unable to make sense of their desire to seek reconciliation with the PLO but not with the Israeli right.) This debate has not reached its climax. It has continued, and finds expression in literary, journalistic, political and personal matters. The herd has split up.

The debate over the possibility of cooperating with the right reflected opposing spiritual, and not merely tactical or political, strategies. The "realists," as Oz prefers his wing to be labelled, read the

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1984 results as a cry from a confused and divided nation for a truce in the stridency of the rhetoric and debate which were pulling the country apart. The process of breakdown was accelerated by the spiralling inflation as well as by the great debates over the future of the West Bank and Gaza, which, after so many years, had produced a messianic and apocalyptic rhetoric not less inflated than the currency. Nor was the left immune to the collective breakdown of the body politic. As Yehoshua explained: just like the right and religious communities slowly succumbing to their own extremists, "part of the left is going crazy."

Oz and Yehoshua argued that the election results demonstrated the left's inability to reach enough of its fellow citizens; and that rather than worrying about the "rehabilitization" of Ariel Sharon, the left should rethink its own rehabilitation among the broad middle group of voters which, despite the compelling evidence of Likud's failed economic and defense policies, did not swing over to support the left.

Those further to the left saw the issues in terms of "class war" and still clung to "civil war" as a social goal. Democracy means compromise, and compromise means muddling through to consensus on the great controversial issues rather than reaching the great cleansing clarification of a final reckoning. The political rhetoric—both religious and secular—reflected apocalyptic thinking, and after the 1984 elections, political reality overtook political rhetoric, leaving many writers behind.

Both on the dovish left and on the annexationist right, there was periodic talk of "civil war." Thus, when Shimon Peres returned from delivering his flexible and forthcoming speech to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1985, the right-wing Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza resolved that any diplomatic giveaway would result in civil war. Comparing Peres to Petain, they vowed to become Israeli De Gaulles. (Later, the author of the resolution told me that he meant to threaten the government with nonviolent civil disobedience, not with civil war. But De Gaulle didn't model his resistance after Gandhi.)

Part of the left welcomed the threat because it confirmed their own extreme worldview. This habit of thought inflates the political rhetoric so that when in discussions of the relationship between religion and state, for example, one's intellectual seriousness now is measured by the ritualistic affirmation that Israel already is experiencing "cultural civil war."

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In part, the insistence on the powerful clash of mutually exclusive ideas serves to reject the language of unity, whose political expression was the coalition. In this sense, "unity" is seen as a flight from clarity, seeking refuge from weariness in confusion. But if the left is unable to reimpose the old ideological hegemony of the labor movement, and Likud is not strong enough to impose its own counter historical myth, the patterns of hegemonic thinking remain intact. The system now requires the ideology of "national unity."

"It is the role of the intellectuals to explode this myth of unity," Yehoshua Sobol, a leading left-wing playwright (whose *Soul of a Jew* and *Ghetto* will appear on Broadway this fall) told me. But if national disagreement should not be swept under the carpet of "unity" it does not have to lead to "civil war" either. And, as we have seen, it is the myth of the unity of Israeli intellectuals that is being exploded.

As against the civil war rhetoric of the left and the right, and the false and hollow unity rhetoric of many of the politicians, writers like Oz and Yehoshua grope towards "a gradual healing" through honest exposure of the numerous wounds in the body politic.

Israeli democracy often works in strange ways. The Ministry of Education and Culture supports the local film industry and theater; but most films and plays have been "left oppositionist." The director or playwright often takes his production abroad, where he is praised as an honest dissident against his regime, only to confound his foreign colleagues by informing them that the major investor was the same Israeli government that is "occupying the West Bank," "denying the Palestinians their rights," and "bombing Beirut."

Sobol's plays have aroused angry passions, and not only on the right. He is the artistic director of the Haifa municipal theater, largely supported by public funds. His latest play, *King of Israel*, addresses the pervasive role of the army, and especially of senior army officers, in the political and moral climate of the country. The play inspired criticism from the left as well as the right. The key theme among the critics was that Sobol was targeting an important national institution, the army, and generalizing from the worst examples (say, Sharon) about what remains a critically necessary part of Israeli life. A dovish Labor Knesset member, Shevach Weiss, attacked Sobol, by comparing the alienation of the intellectuals from the people and the voting patterns of the past decade: "The right has grown while the left has diminished . . . he who is alienated from his people will find that they become alienated from him."

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In a review of the play, Tom Segev—himself on the left—wrote that he had "not learned anything that I didn't already know about Sharon, the Israeli army or my Israel. . . . I am still waiting for a smart playwright, Sobol, for example, who will examine the self-enclosed elitism, the sexism, the racism . . . to be found also among journalists of the dovish left."

Sobol's plays weren't out of step with the trend among serious cultural productions. The great majority of Israeli films, plays, and sociology over the past four years has centered on the dark side of Jewish—Arab relations: on the economic, power, and sexual relations between the colonialist and the colonized. The films have dealt with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, with an Israeli army officer falling in love with a Palestinian woman; or the death of an Arab village youth at the hands of an Israeli farmer who found him sleeping with his sister; or an Israeli leftist caught in a tragic triangle between Palestinian guerillas and nonviolent PLO supporters and vicious Israeli security agents.

The most successful of these films, *Behind the Bars*, was directed and written by the Barabash brothers, reserve army officers who have a dovish left politics. (One of them addressed the famous rally of four hundred thousand following Sabra and Shatilla.) *Behind the Bars* takes place inside a prison where officials keep Jewish underclass prisoners and Arab politicals apart through the skillful manipulation of heroin sales and nationalist demagogy. Finally, the Jewish hero, a streetsmart but basically decent hoodlum, and the leader of the Palestinian politicals, band together and lead a successful hunger strike against the authorities.

If the underlying message, that nothing separates Jews and Arabs except the false consciousness of nationalism and drugs, is a crude Marxist theme, the film is slick and well-made.

Hagai Eshed, a journalist closely associated with Shimon Peres, launched an attack on the film, and on the tendency to disparage Israel, in a column in the Labor newspaper *Davar*. The cultural world is "destroying Israeli myths and building up Palestinian myths," he wrote, and cited an article by an intellectual called in to help the Education Ministry "teach democracy" in the schools and combat right-wing extremism. And he denounced "land and power" as "nationalist-fundamentalist" factors distorting Israeli democracy.

"'Land and power' is the translation into the fashionable jargon [of the left] of the Hebrew Zionist words 'settlement and defense'," wrote Eshed. Part of the left, according to Eshed, is using the im-

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portant fight against Kahane and right-wing extremism generally to withdraw from the high ground of positive Zionism.

Professor Yosef Ben-Shlomo, an expert on Spinoza, is one of the few intellectuals to have moved from left to right. He is now a full-fledged Gush Emunim activist. In a recent interview with *Davar* he criticized "the new literature, theater, and films" as well as the government-owned radio and television stations for "trying to prove that there is nothing worth dying for. . . . They are convincing the public that we conquered the country of an alien nation. . . . Most Israeli plays concern themselves with the wrong we did to the Palestinians and compare us to Nazis."

Two of the left writers who opposed the call for national unity in 1984 recently provided another glimpse of their "the worse, the better" worldview. Writing in the mass-circulation daily *Yediot Ahronot*, Nathan Zach and Dan Meron attacked Peres for his handling of the General Securities Service (Shin Bet) affair, raising serious questions about Peres's vacillating and indecisive leadership on this issue. (The case involves a cover-up of the killing of two PLO terrorists by the Shin Bet after they had surrendered for interrogation.) But for Meron and Zach, Peres's "all out war" on the rule of law convinced them that "the open hooliganism of people like Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Shamir now seems to us preferable from a public—and even from a moral—standpoint than the hypocrisy of the Labor leaders." Peres, who, unlike some of his Labor and most of his Likud rivals, never inquires into the number of divisions writers command, felt duty bound to respond personally to the attack, and defended his record in a subsequent article.

Zach has begun a weekly column in the leftist *Ha'olam Hazeh*, whose editor Uri Avneri broke through Israeli lines to enter Beirut in 1982 and interview Yasir Arafat but failed to ask him the one question which alone could have justified the rather questionable circumstances of the interview: will the PLO recognize Israel?

In his new column, Zach launched an attack on Amos Oz, not only because Oz co-authored the unity call, but because he went to talk things over with Yitzhak Shamir. Zach argued that Labor should have formed a government with the communists (which, by the way, still wouldn't have sufficed for a Knesset majority) pointing to the precedent of communist participation in government in France and Italy. But Israel's communists, like the old mum in the British film *Morgan*, "refuse to de-Stalinize." They aren't even Euro-communists, not that *that* would mean much. Oz replied in *Davar* in an article en-

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titled "Revolutionary Guards," "The communist parties of France and Italy are to [the Israeli communist party] as Brecht is to Ulbrecht." As for the inflated rhetoric of the left, "If Israel is almost Nazi, Nathan Zach is almost Thomas Mann. If Israel is only sick with religious and nationalistic fanaticism, Nathan Zach is only Nathan Zach."

The split in the left can also be read as the clash between an emerging "new" and the traditional "old" left. The new left is middle-class and not necessarily socialist. It is dovish and concerns itself with civil rights and civil liberties (and is therefore perceived to be anti-religious). In an article in *Nekuda* (May 30, 1986), the monthly journal of the Council of Jewish Settlements, Yehuda Zoldan attacked this new left for a politics based on cultural narcissism and atomized individuals. "Unlike the past," he wrote, "the secular left now does not accept national and social views which unite in the realization of the national renaissance, but [rather] in a wider, more universal, human vision, at the center of which stands the individual. Society, the state, the nation (including the family) are merely tools for the enrichment of the individual life."

Aharon Megged is an Israeli short story writer and novelist who for many years contributed a weekly column to *Davar*. In March 1986, he published an article in the left-wing *Al Hamishmar* in which he turned the full force of his considerable literary talents against this new and doctrinaire left. "The left—educated, intelligent, master of morality, the 'salt of the earth' in its own eyes—appears now to be a small aristocratic minority," suffering from the "arrogance" which is both cause and effect of its being "cut off from the masses."

Like Eshed, Megged thinks the left has given up the politics of national reconstruction to the right. Rather than "dirty its hands" in building a new society, Megged argues, the new left is taken up by "speeches, protests, demonstrations." It is as if, he concludes, "they inherited the pathos of the Revisionists [right-wing Zionists] who loved the power of words over the power of action."

Supporters of this left can be found demonstrating in solidarity with Israeli Arabs on "Lands Day" but not living in the hilltop settlements along the border with Lebanon. The left is "apathetic" to the struggle for Soviet Jewry—and not only failed to welcome Anatoly Shcharansky when he arrived at Ben Gurion airport, but was positively ambiguous about his coming home. (Many Soviet Jewish activists, including Shcharansky's wife Avital, support the right in Israel.)

Megged is emphatically not of the right which he describes as "a world completely alien to me." He continues to support a solution

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to the Israel-Arab dispute based on "compromise and partition." He even rejects the "illogical and politically blind stubborn refusal to negotiate with the PLO." But he is not comfortable with the left, even though he identifies with its struggles "against racism, religious coercion, oppression of the Arabs and for social justice and peace." In a television interview shortly after the publication of his article, he denied having changed his views: rather, "The left," he said, "has left me."

The left, continued Megged, reserves its hatreds for "enemies at home" and has nothing left for those outside. They use their art to deepen the sense of "self-guilt not only as regards the West Bank but as regards Israel altogether."

Megged's article unleashed the debate over which intellectuals were guilty of betrayal—and of what sort. Marak Gefen, an old/new leftist and veteran journalist, accused Megged and other writers of his "Palmach [1948] generation" of weakness and exhaustion. What does Megged want? —Gefen wants to know. "Megged should admit openly," Gefen said, that he wants the left to reconcile itself to the settlement of the West Bank and Gaza, that is to the annexationist program of the right. Megged's critique, concluded Gefen, is "unjust, unfounded, and unfair."

Emboldened, Megged embroidered his thesis, in the mass circulation *Yediot Ahronot* (April 23, 1986). This time, he accused the intellectuals of undermining the people's faith in itself and in the essential justice of their corporate existence.

"Large parts of Israeli society are suffering a failure of nerve. . . . A wave of studies, polls, plays and films have engulfed us . . . with the goal of proving that our being in this country is founded in sin, sealed in sin, and that we shall receive our due punishment."

He listed six accusations against Israel: that the Jews stole the Arabs' lands rather than redeemed it, acre by acre, in the slow and heroic process which saw *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* go up all over the country, from swamp to desert; that Hebrew-labor was intended to destroy the Arab economy, rather than to create a "normative" Jewish one; that the leaders of the labor movement were interested (Kahane-like) in ridding the country of the Arabs; that the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war were expelled by the Israeli army; that the main Jewish undergrounds, the Haganna and the Palmach, were cruel to the civilian Arab population; that every Israeli government rejected the peaceful hand extended from Egypt, Jordan, and the other Arab countries.

What is most upsetting, writes Megged, is that these accusations

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were put forward "not in the Middle East Institute in Leningrad, nor in the Kreisky school in Vienna, nor by anti-Zionists in Princeton, nor by anti-Semites in Paris, but here, by Jewish-Israelis."

All the accusations of the Israelis as "racist" and "antidemocratic" —and which receive ample press coverage—fly in the face of the Israeli reality. "If that were true," Megged told me, "every time there was an Arab terrorist attack, there would be a pogrom against an Arab village or neighborhood."

Again, he tries to define a center course. If the left is guilty of blaming Israel for everything, it has correctly seen the corrupting influence of the occupation. But the occupation not only forces Israelis to rule another people, and distorts the social structure by driving Israelis out of low-paying and low-status jobs. It also caused, says Megged, many Israeli intellectuals "to perversely reach complete identification, heart and soul, with the enemy whose declared goal is our destruction." They influence "wide circles" and have "created a public climate" in which their criticisms have become staples of "conventional wisdom." By challenging the national confidence, Megged continues, the left has undermined national security: "Whoever does not fool himself that the terrible war in Lebanon was our last war, asks himself with growing concern where we will find the moral strength—that same strength of which we were so proud, and on which we depended more than on our arsenal—to stand against our enemies in the difficult struggles ahead?"

With the battle lines drawn, other writers and journalists leaped in. Writing in Megged's old paper, *Davar*, Hayyim Guri (one of the four who called on the left to join the national unity government) said that the new left is intolerant, except when it comes to "our neighbors," that is, the Arabs. Then it "makes allowances and sympathetically understands their 'primitivism', their 'folklore', their 'sacred tenets' and 'preconceived notions'." When it comes to Israel, they completely reject these aspects of the culture.

Guri sees the conflict as one between the modish left and the "rooted and traditional left" to which he and Megged belong. Gefen's attempt to read Megged, Guri and other writers out of the left is to Guri a reminder that Gefen and his Mapam were once pro-Stalinist.

The next day, Hagai Eshed attacked the left for identifying with the PLO, and for ignoring Middle Eastern realities.

In a previous piece criticizing the dovish left, Guri proposed that the government give Peace Now a mandate to negotiate with the PLO—in order to prove once and for all that the PLO is unwill-

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ing and/or incapable of making peace with Israel. He also wrote, "It is enough for Arab intelligence agencies to read our newspapers, poems, books, and satires; it is enough for them to watch our plays and films . . . in order to conclude" that they can take advantage of the inner divisions in Israeli society by "starting another war in order to gain 'momentum'."

Another battle along the front has been waged all year by Yehoshua and Anton Shammas. Shammas is a Christian Arab from the Israeli village of Fasuta near the Lebanese border, who published a major novel this year—*Arabesques*—in Hebrew. It is the first major Hebrew novel written by a non-Jew.

In a televised meeting on Arab-Jewish relations, Yehoshua attacked Shammas for failing to stand up to the Arab rejectionists with anything approaching the strength of purpose with which Yehoshua and other Jewish doves have stood up to the Jewish right. In an interview in *Politika*, the monthly journal of the left-opposition Ratz party, Yehoshua enumerated his problems with the new left generally, and with Shammas specifically. The left, according to Yehoshua, ignores statements, "like that of Shammas, when he argued for changing the flag and the national anthem. . . ." Answering Shammas's proposal of the creation of a new Israeli culture and national identity not based on Jewish/Arab categories, Yehoshua said: "This is a Jewish state, just as Spain is a Spanish state. . . . [Shammas] opposed the creation of the State of Israel. . . . After a Palestinian state is established, Israeli Arabs will begin demanding within Israel a secular multi-national, multi-religious state like the United States. . . . If [Shammas] wants [his] full identity, if [he] wants to live in a state with a full Palestinian personality, with an original Palestinian culture, [he should] move one hundred meters eastward to the Palestinian state which will arise alongside the State of Israel."

Two issues later, Shammas launched a counterattack. "I don't want the creation of a Palestinian state," he explained, "but of the state of Palestine, a state whose citizens will belong to the Palestinian nation." And he dismissed Yehoshua's vision of Israel as a Jewish majority state as a primitive "desire to establish a state with his Jewish Terror organization brothers"; that is, as a preference for fascist Jews as against progressive Palestinians like himself.

The challenge that Shammas poses to the national consensus is different from—but combines with—the challenge from the left. Israeli Arabs have developed a unique identity as Arabs, Palestinians and Israelis, and there is nowhere else in the Middle East where they

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would now feel at home. They constitute seventeen percent of the Israeli population (not counting the Palestinians in the territories). But the legitimate demands they make of what has become their country can be met without denying the Jewish majority its right to define the central characteristics of the state. A left which is cut off from the desire of the majority for self-determination can never lead the nation.

The language of the left is dominated by the negativism of opposition—opposition to "clerical nationalism," opposition to "racism," opposition to brutality against Arabs living under "the occupation." In a peculiar way, the no's of the left parody the "no" of the Israeli right to flexible diplomacy. But a political movement which cuts itself off from the national imperatives has no part in the political solutions to the problems of the nation. It becomes inward, closed, doctrinaire, and makes up in militancy what it lacks in support.

The hopeful sign is that Peres's stumbling attempts to recapture the center are reflected rather more articulately by a significant group of intellectuals trying to recreate the "dialogue with the majority." The left must learn to clip the wings of its own soaring rhetoric, and communicate with the mainstream of Israeli society. Unless it learns to do so, Israeli political culture will continue to be torn by false messianism, bitter confusion, and hollow confirmations of the national self.

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BOOKS

FATHERS AND SONS

PRODIGAL SONS: THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS AND THEIR WORLD. By Alexander Bloom. Oxford University Press. $24.95.

Reading the latest history of the New York intellectuals gives one the strange feeling of reliving one's life. "I should have done this, I shouldn't have done that," I kept muttering to myself. If only one could have another chance, it might be better than an afterlife.

But aside from the afterglow of the lived life, certain less personal questions press upon one. I had to wonder how history can ever be written objectively, or accurately—or whether, as historians have argued for years, there is such a thing as objective history. Certainly, as I read Bloom's account of the New York intellectuals, I was constantly aware not only of Bloom's persistent bias, but of the fact that every one of the so-called prodigal sons, including myself, had his own bias, his own notion not only of the "facts" but of the meaning of events and of the motives and ideas of the central characters. No, I thought, as I was reading about our exploits, our hangups, our successes, our failures, our saintliness, our vileness, this isn't right, this is not exactly the way it happened. History is obviously in one's head: in this case, in my head.

Then there is the perennial—and unresolved—argument over whether archives are more dependable than memory and whether a consensus of the prejudices of the survivors, drawn from interviews, is better than a memoir. Still, one thing is clear: memoirs may be distorted, but they convey the flavor, the live sense, of what it actually was like, while scholarly accounts frequently miss the fact that we were often responding to specific situations or acting spontaneously, and not enacting a tightly woven plot, a historical drama. Retroactively, people and events are flattened out as historians have to hang a narrative on an ideological scheme. T. S. Eliot made the now-famous observation that every new work of art transforms the art of the past. But he had in mind new works which themselves become part of the created history of art. If we are to draw a parallel to historical writing, it is clear that Bloom's point of view toward the past comes from his views in the present. And the question then is how original or sound these views are.

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The story has been told so many times: at least the gist of it should be familiar by now. It starts in the thirties with the beginnings of *Partisan Review*, goes through the achievements and changing fortunes of the literary and intellectual community—baptized by Norman Podhoretz as the "family"—and ends up with its dispersal and the emergence of the neoconservatives. The story involves personal relations, political arguments, literary ideas—woven into the larger social fabric of the period. Bloom drapes his narrative around two main themes: on the one hand, the immigrant origin and Jewishness of most of the *Partisan Review* pioneers, on the other hand, the drive to "make it" and to adapt to the demands of American society by the extended "family." With these irresistible forces, Bloom is able to mount a full-blown scenario into which every twist and turn, personal as well as political, fits as neatly as in a Dorothy Sayers mystery. This pattern makes it seem as though we were psychologically predestined to become radicals in our youth, to have a brief fling with the communists, to break with them when they became too constricting, and then gradually to become more and more conservative as we made our mark and began to live off the fat of the land —and all to a large extent because of being Jewish. A tidy scheme, and one, it must be admitted, that is made plausible by the popular myth of the genealogy of success and its irresistible temptations to "sell out." To be sure, this summary of Bloom's themes makes them sound more schematic than they appear in his book, which does include many other factors. But essentially this is the *politicus ex machina* of the material rise and moral fall of the New York intellectuals, of whom I happened to have been a charter member.

This is not meant as a put-down of the book. For Bloom has attempted a conscientious job of excavation of an admittedly complex subject, buried in the underground where individual idiosyncrasies and talents are tangled up with politics and intellectual history. Much of the book has valuable information; a good deal of it seems right to me. He has also tried, if not always, at least some of the time, to be reasonable and balanced. He has, for example, with only a few notable exceptions, been quite fair, and often generous, in his portrait of me. But his bias does show through, in his choice of language, where, as in Freudian slips, his true feelings are revealed, and in his characterization of views that do not fit into his political scheme.

Bloom's bias, so far as I can make out, has a lib-left tinge, bordering on anti-anticommunism, according to which the Soviet

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Union is usually not regarded as a major threat to the West, nor, for that matter, as a malevolent totalitarian state. Thus Bloom refers to the liberal anticommunists as "cold war liberals," or "cold war intellectuals." (He often dismisses conservative anticommunists as "cold warriors.") It is interesting that he does not call fellow-travellers "cold war fellow travellers." Nor is it always clear whether he thinks the cold war is a purely American concoction. And while he refers to our criticism of the communists as "abuse," he does not cite the actual abuse heaped on us by the communists. (Philip Rahv and I, for example, were called "literary snakes" and "lackeys of imperialism," and Diana Trilling was described as a "mad dog of imperialism,") He also refers to the Nazi-Soviet pact not so much as a cynical and corrupt act but as an occasion for the "*PR* intellectuals to gloat over it." On the McCarthy episode, Bloom makes it seem that the "*Partisan Review* liberals" were against civil liberties, which, according to Bloom, the Stalinists and fellow-travellers championed. He does not mention the fact that the Stalinists were not for civil liberties for their opponents. He also implies that the anti-Stalinism of *Partisan Review* served McCarthy's purposes, while he praises fellow-travelling anti-McCarthyism. At times his bias leads him to reduce the politics of the *Partisan Reviewers* to simple hawkishness or intolerance. Thus, at one point he says Sidney Hook's "call to action" against Stalinism "sounded like a call to war." At other times he describes the anti-Stalinism of Diana Trilling—among others—as dogmatic and allowing for no disagreement. And so on.

Bloom also makes a number of mistakes—that, perhaps, are inevitable if one has not lived through the earlier period. Some of these are due to the difficulty of sorting out the complicated political movements of the past, others to his own political assumptions. For example, Bloom appears to believe that the anti-Stalinists around *Partisan Review*, like myself, were opposed to the Popular Front because it was not revolutionary enough. The fact is that the Popular Front was a typical Stalinist reversal of "line" (directed from Moscow) from a revolutionary anti-American position to an embarrassing eulogy of America. It also was not a genuine united front: it was a euphemism for a tricky Stalinist maneuver to gather liberals into organizations under communist control. Bloom argues, too, that the turn away from the radicalism of the thirties came because of some genetic urge to become conservative and fall in love with America, and not because the transformation of the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state with an expansionist foreign policy made it necessary to

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defend Western democracy. The truth is that it had become clear to us that revolutionary Marxism was no longer tenable and that it spawned undemocratic movements, which the Soviet Union was able to exploit for its own ends.

Often errors of fact and interpretation go together. For instance: Bloom says of the famous Waldorf Conference in 1949, at which fellow-travelling writers and a few Russian delegates celebrated the dedication to peace of the Soviet Union, that, unlike the cold warriorism of the Americans for Intellectual Freedom, which opposed the Conference, the procommunist gathering stood for coexistence. Bloom also resurrects the old charge when he implies that the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, like the Congress for Cultural Freedom, was completely supported by the C.I.A. And he lists James T. Farrell among those members of the committee who were "heading right." The fact is that though Farrell occasionally made extreme statements, he could not be said on the whole to have moved very far to the right, unless you designate all anticommunists as right-wingers. In discussing the often-quoted *Partisan Review* symposium in 1952, "Our Country and Our Culture," Bloom says one of its primary aims was to reconcile mass culture with high culture in order to defend American democracy. On the contrary, the editorial statement indicated that America had to be supported despite our reservations about mass culture. Bloom also suggests that Podhoretz became a neoconservative in order to break with his "intellectual mentors." This is not only an irresponsible psychoanalytic speculation that cannot possibly be documented, but it also ignores Podhoretz's overriding concern over the defense of the West. Another misreading of political history is the assertion that the new left arose as a "reaction to neoconservatism"—when just the opposite is true. Neoconservatism was a response to what it regarded as the blindness of the liberals and the left to political realities. And Bloom describes Daniel Bell's essay on the New American Right as a "neoconservative critique of populism." The fact is that Bell himself has reproached the neoconservatives for their political populism, and in this piece he was mainly calling attention to the dangers lurking on the far right. On the whole, Bloom glosses over Bell's differences with the neoconservatives. Then, too, there are errors of association, such as the inclusion of Senator Paul Douglas in a list of people who supposedly shared our values and concerns.

In general, neither our earlier nor our current political views

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can be understood without being aware of the meaning of the events and the ideas to which we have been responding. Taken out of this context, our views could be made to appear self-propelled and even capricious. Thus, for instance, if one takes a neutral stand on the question of the guilt of Hiss and the Rosenbergs, as Bloom does, it would seem that we thought them guilty not on the basis of the evidence and our personal knowledge of Stalinism but mainly because of our anti-Stalinism.

But there is also another kind of distortion, perhaps inevitable by one who has not had the same experience. By overmotivating and schematizing our lives, a scholarly historian tends to ignore those aspects of our thinking, particularly in literary matters, that could not be reduced to political considerations. The fact is that some of our ideas were quite personal, even though there was a kind of collective consciousness, for many of us were essentially literary, not political, intellectuals. Hence we were sometimes almost as much interested in being original and interesting as in being correct. And I believe it is this combination of political and literary sensibility that has enabled us to have had an intellectual as well as a literary influence—which most students of the period, including Bloom, think we did. We were charged up, excited by incessant arguments, by new ideas, by new works; and for those of us who edited *Partisan Review*, there were the triumphs of creating a new intellectual atmosphere. At the same time we were leading intense personal lives, and to tell the truth, we also were not above being fascinated with x-rated gossip. We were not simply the agents of history, to which we often have been reduced by academic or one-sided political portraits.

Though a history cannot have the qualities of a memoir, when Bloom's biases do not interfere, his book is quite valuable. And it is always interesting as a documentary, however flawed, of the ideas and events that shape our thinking today. Bloom is a professor of history at Wheaton College, whose prodigious research has produced the first full-scale portrait of an era, and his zeal in combing every pertinent record and speaking with every person involved with the subject is quite impressive. Perhaps it is some measure of the worth of the book that I learned many things from it that I did not know. But, after all, I was only a participant. Still, as a participant, I must say that in the future, students of the period cannot accept *Prodigal Sons* as the definitive record of the so-called "New York intellectuals."

Unfortunately, I should add, the book has been badly edited: it

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is full of repetitions and typographical errors. And the writing is often quite pedestrian.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

BAKHTIN'S MASKS

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN. By Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist. Harvard University Press. $25.00.

What kind of man was it who, having lost one leg through osteomyelitis and in danger of losing the other, who seemingly drank only tea in a life of austere marital seclusion, wrote so enthusiastically of the "grotesque body" and "prandial libertinism"? Who was Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin? Currently among the most influential and fashionable of critics, he is an enigma. We're not even sure whether he wrote the books that are ascribed to him. Was he a wily Christian who kept his head down and disguised his crypto-religious beliefs as an enthusiasm for folk-populism, or was he a dedicated anti-Stalinist Marxist? Was he both, and if so where did his mysticism and his politics conflict and converge?

Despite assiduous archival research and patient gleaning of facts from those who knew him, Clark and Holquist, in this ambitious biography, are able to answer none of these questions satisfactorily. At the end of their sizeable book one gets the uncomfortable impression that, like the rogue *Ser Ciapelletto*, in the Boccaccio story of which he was very fond, and which Clark and Holquist rather ruefully quote in their introduction, Bakhtin has outwitted his biographers.

He emerges from these pages without motives or passions, a sort of puzzling and empty appendage to his own major writings: bland, remote, even colorless, his thoughts and emotional life hidden from us despite the diligence and admiration of his biographers. Aside from his academic publications, the whole biography contains no single revealing word from Bakhtin about himself. The fact is that he was a remarkably undemonstrative, phlegmatic, at times even reclusive personality. Many of those who knew him best died in the terrible years of the thirties. Living precariously through a

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period of immense upheaval and dislocation, he was exiled to remote parts of Russia where he lived until the last part of his life in relative seclusion and intellectual isolation from the mainstream of Soviet life. He didn't write letters, and he didn't keep intimate journals or diaries (though this may have been general political common sense at the time, to judge from the Akhmatova biography). We shall never know why he was so apparently indifferent to his own documents and writings—he used one important manuscript for cigarette paper during a paper shortage. What can be written about him in large measure has to be circumstantial, inferred either from the kind of company he kept or from his published scholarly writings.

In the absence of a substantial amount of biographical material, most of the book is given over to a critical elucidation of Bakhtin's major writings, which Clark and Holquist have done the invaluable job of translating and disseminating in the West over the last few years. But alas, any hope we might have had that biographical light could be shed upon the writings is quickly disappointed. In his book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin remarked that critics take note of the swarming ideologies which conflict and collide with each other in Dostoevsky's world, "and yet sooner or later they end up choosing one of the conflicting voices as 'truly representing' Dostoevsky's 'own' point of view, which is really their own point of view." The same holds true of course for critical discussion of Bakhtin himself, and though his biographers here responsibly point out this danger, they naturally go ahead to do precisely the same thing.

The resulting interpretation is a very conservative one. The biography reveals an embarassment with Bakhtin's Marxism that it seeks to resolve by emphasizing the religious and metaphysical strands in his thinking. Bakhtin's Marxism is either presented as superficial, no more than a pragmatic genuflection for reasons of self-preservation in the Stalinist state, or it is denied altogether. Is it really true, as Clark and Holquist suggest, that when Bakhtin arrived in Leningrad in 1924 during his "most productive period," he began his translation of Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* purely as a "quixotic attempt to make money"? What evidence is there that this was a project motivated only by financial necessity? And why is translating Lukács "quixotic"? In this respect the project is reminiscent of the current mystification of Walter Benjamin, which metamorphoses a committed Marxist who was *also* a deeply religious thinker, exclusively into a Jewish mystic. I am suspicious of the way this biogra-

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phy dissolves Bakhtin's straightforward use of political categories, which he employs in his mature work, back into the metaphysical generalities of his earliest writing. Thus in discussing the *Freudianism* book, Clark and Holquist write:

> This observation that economic factors of being determine consciousness sounds at first like the most orthodox kind of *a priori* Marxist thinking brought to bear on the specific topic of language, but it reads just as easily as a restatement of Bakhtin's thesis in *The Architectonics* that human existence is the dual interaction between a world that is already there (uze stavsee bytie) and a mind that is conjoined (priobscen) to this world through the activity (postupok) of enacting values. . . . Beyond these general meanings, there is no specifically or exclusively Marxist significance in such terms as "socioeconomic base" or "classgroundedness."

What special pleading is going on here? If "socioeconomic base" and "classgroundedness" are not specifically Marxist terms and used as such by Bakhtin, one wonders why not. Bakhtin is even called "a non-Marxist," yet there is no evidence that Bakhtin was not at least as influenced by Marxism as was Walter Benjamin. What purpose is served to suggest that *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, written with his colleague Volosinov, is a "myth of significance," "a story of a dying and reviving God," when in fact it is a fairly technical sociolinguistic discussion about *Marxism and the philosophy of language*?

Unfortunately this decision by the authors to dissociate Bakhtin from his Marxism carries over into the question of "the disputed texts," the vexed question of authorship surrounding *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (credited to Medvedev); *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (credited to Volosinov); and three other articles. "Unfortunately, there is nothing on paper to resolve this controversy once and for all," write Clark and Holquist, "no account of how and by whom these texts were written can ever be indisputable." In 1975, when Bakhtin assented to the preparation of a document clarifying the matter and stating that he wrote the disputed books and the articles concerned, he refused to sign it when it was offered to him.

Clark and Holquist are then largely thrown back upon internal evidence to arbitrate over authorship, and here they work on the assumption that the less directly Marxist the language, the more

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"purely Bakhtinian" the text ("The second part [of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*], while not free of Marxist declarations, seems more purely Bakhtinian in its stress on context and intonation. . . ."): it seems an extraordinary principle to arbitrate the disputed texts by throwing out all the Marxism and imputing it to the cruder political tastes of his friends.

There are delights in the book, particularly the account of Mikhail's sibling rivalry with his brother Nikolai, who became Professor of Classics at the University of Birmingham in England and who taught Wittgenstein Russian. (In 1930 Nikolai discovered his brother's book on Dostoevsky in a French translation in Paris: Dostoevsky was Wittgenstein's favorite author; did Wittgenstein read the book, one wonders? Is Terry Eagleton right in speculating that Wittgenstein's late phase may be, to some degree, "Bakhtinian"?)

The authors bravely attempt to do justice to the polymath breadth of Bakhtin's thinking, yet there seems no doubt that a failure to recognize the full *political* charge of his thought troubles the evenhandedness of their design. In their introduction they caution us to be skeptical, to "not take any particular version of Bakhtin, including ours, as canonical." It is justly and modestly said, and the reader should be armed, and not disarmed, by the warning.

ALLON WHITE

THE GREAT TRADITION

AN AMERICAN PROCESSION: THE MAJOR AMERICAN WRITERS FROM 1830 TO 1933—THE CRUCIAL CENTURY. By Alfred Kazin. Alfred A. Knopf. $18.95.

It is hardly a surprise that in *An American Procession* Alfred Kazin writes no ordinary literary criticism. Since *On Native Grounds* (1942), that precociously magisterial work of his youth (he was then twenty-seven years old), Kazin's has been a distinctive critical voice, whether in literary essay, cultural commentary, or memoir: vivid, engaged, quarrelsome, lyrical. The present book is vintage Kazin: a book unmistakably *written*, an account of one reader's experiences of a world, in this case constituted by a "procession" of twenty Ameri-

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can literary figures. The classic writers, from Emerson to Fitzgerald, are his subject, and what interests him most is the authors' relation to their work, to their times, to their Americanness.

The very way Kazin identifies his "text," what he writes about, points up the striking difference here from current critical modes and fashions. Indeed his is a criticism which eschews both formalist analysis and global theories. Kazin takes as his subject an entire gestalt of issues and concerns. He seeks out points of pressure between a literary work or a career and a historical predicament, junctures at which the uniqueness of a writer's vision and creative energy stand revealed. "Here is a book," he writes about Mark Twain's masterpiece,

> which is an absolute marvel of style, but in which, by a greater marvel, life is not reduced to style and is certainly not confused with style. Huck Finn's voice has many sides, but fundamentally it is the voice of a boy-man up to his ears in life, tumbling from danger to danger, negotiating with people, and fighting back at things as necessity commands. The sense of necessity that only bottom dogs know is what gives such unmediated, unintellectualized beauty to the style. Mark Twain, fully for the first time, knew how to let life carry out its own rhythm.

This is criticism as a kind of translation: Mark Twain's art into Kazin's insight—insight not only into the workings of Huck Finn's mind (character usually takes precedence in Kazin's treatment of fiction over plot or structure), but into something more encompassing, into the functions and uses of a style, into the sources of an artist's special energies.

Taken together, such insights, such clusters of detail drawn from sources beyond the literary text alone—"the voice of a boy-man up to his ears in life"; "the sense of necessity that only bottom dogs know"—constitute the point of view (something less keyed to specific analyses that an "interpretation") which is what *An American Procession* is about. In the most vital regard the book is about Kazin in the act of reading. Students looking for a new argument, an addition to knowledge of American literature as a field or discipline, an explanation of what certain works "mean" and how they work as literary art, may be disappointed. But they may also come away enlightened about the narrowness of such expectations. Kazin simply means something different by "criticism." He means "experience," he means

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performance: the critic in the act of self-discovery, working out his own responses, finding the properly evocative and suggestive language whereby to ground the effect of a literary work in a specific reader's experience.

Indeed we might say that the book consists more of a voice, the articulation through a set of responses of a moral point of view, than of an explicit argument. Not that what it says about its subjects cannot be summarized and appraised: its thematic emphases on "self," on "history," on "style," for example. These terms point to the conceptual substance of Kazin's point of view, what he has to say about American writers in the hundred-year period covered by the book. The insights are never trivial or inconsequential. But what invites a higher regard, is the very fact of such a book at such a time. It is as if hearing a voice from another place, another discourse, refusing to keep still.

Criticism matters for Kazin only to the extent that it recounts and reconstructs the experience of reading—not as a narrow event of literary analysis but a more fully biographical event: not so much "personal" as *individual*, belonging to someone who far from keeping himself out of the picture makes himself, his reactions, his enthusiasms the very center of the composition. It is not a question of egotism but of consciousness and of history. Like Eliot, Kazin has insisted that the critic must write with a "sense of the age in his bones." Criticism matters, as he wrote almost twenty-five years ago in an homage to Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism Today," because only the critic registers and makes articulate the challenge to consciousness in "that new balance of forces that is a work of art." And he does so only insofar as he is "always a writer," serious about his own craft, committed to serving as the medium whereby art meets its future. "The critic who writes well," Kazin argued movingly, "is the critic who lives in literature, who is involved himself and therefore sees the involvement of literature in our conduct, our thinking, our pleasures, our human fate." And "he writes to convince, to argue, to establish his argument in a way that pure logic would never approve and pure scholarship would never understand, but which is justifiable, if it succeeds, as a moral argument in the great tradition of literature."

It is a high office, this notion of criticism, and Kazin is one of the few surviving masters of the genre. He writes on terms of intimacy with the lives as well as the works of his figures, with inconspicuous but telling social detail as well as the largest patterns of

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aspiration and inner conflict. Consider what he makes of a detail like Henry Adams's surprise that his black butler, brought along to Chicago in 1893 to cook for his boss's party, had been too busy to take in the World's Fair. The remark helps construct the complex picture which makes of Adams one of the book's key figures, one of Kazin's triumphs of portraiture. Or his pleasure in his own figurative language, as this description of Ralph Touchett, "dangling from the tree of his father's millions like a withered apple about to fall." Or his description of Hemingway's style: "To read Hemingway was always to feel more alive. The spontaneous reaction was pleasure from the cunning way sentences fall, from the bright echoing separateness of the words, from every picture a passage put into the mind. One was brought close to some exceptional vividness."

And yet there is something disquieting about *An American Procession.* For Kazin writes as if nothing has changed in the twenty or more years since he began this book as the Christian Gauss lectures in 1961, as if his belief in the authority and power of literature remains an unquestioned principle. "Russian literature of the nineteenth century made the revolution possible," he wrote in his 1962 essay on the function of criticism, and quotes Randall Jarrell's remark that "in America today many intellectual couples turn to criticism for the sort of guidance they used to get from a minister." Indeed Kazin's high-minded version of criticism derives from that moment when it seemed, in light of the failure of ideologies and revolutions, that writers were all we had to rely on for guidance, for consolation, for reliable insight. In 1962, with Lionel Trilling and Edmund Wilson, Philip Rahv and Randall Jarrell and Kazin himself as living examples, it seemed no more than commonplace to remark that "the critic who teaches literature is now the focus for values and influence that in other cultures are furnished by the family, religion, political ideologies."

How to account for the decline in prominence and influence of the humanist writer-critic is not to be ventured here. Surely there will be no disagreement that for better or for worse current literary theorizing represents only a symptom of a more fundamental shift in the status of literature, not to say of literacy itself. It comes with something of a jolt to realize that Kazin's book, begun in the early 1960s, shows no overt signs that anything has changed in "the function of criticism," let alone in the notion of "major writers."

A curious lapse, for one might have expected polemic. To be sure the apparently unruffled assumption we find of a continuous

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critical discourse over the past two or three decades may itself be a reaction to the times. For is there not a kind of embattlement in the stance itself of meditating upon a "great tradition," a procession of writers valued and cherished in the old modernist way?

The procession seems the obvious one, embracing the "classic" writers. But unacknowledged in the book is the fact that just such an "American procession" has been under severe criticism recently, on grounds not necessarily literary. Except for Emily Dickinson, Kazin's major figures are all male, all white, all native born. Does it not seem reasonable to ask, though few were asking in 1961, why no black writers appear in a study of a "crucial century" which includes the literary careers of Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Dubois, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes and other Harlem writers of the 1920s? Or why major woman writers like Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein appear only as pendants to a more prominent male writer?

True, also among the missing are Frost, Stevens, Hart Crane, William Carlos Williams, Eugene O'Neill. The book deals with figures, not movements, with individuals rather than categories. The issue is not who is in and who is not, but what the unstated measure of selection and exclusion might reveal about the role of the writer-critic at the present time.

This is not to berate Kazin, I hope it is clear, for failing to obey an obviously inappropriate principle of affirmative action in literary criticism. Few critics have been as eloquent as he in defense of democratic values. The questions I raise point instead to something less crude and obvious: the absence in the book of direct reflection upon itself, upon its own principles, its assumptions about literature, upon the predicament of criticism under conditions that prevail today. And the absence too of overt signs of that essential "struggle with oneself" of which Kazin speaks in his 1962 essay: "Any critic who is any good is going to write out of a profound inner struggle between what has been and what must be, the values he is used to and those which presently exist, between the past and the present out of which the future must be born."

Do we expect too much? *An American Procession* seems to construct a hedge against an encroaching history, a line of writers through whom Kazin himself has obviously come better to possess and understand his own relations to the place and the idea called America. The book is remarkable for its considerable artistry: the way, for example, its argument regarding "ruling by style" and the personal element in American writing makes room for itself within

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the procession. Kazin, self-portrayed "New York Jew," speaks of "the culture that I share with Adams" (letting the patrician's nasty anti-Semitism pass this time). Criticism veers toward memoir, toward autobiography, toward a mode Kazin identifies with America itself. "American writing is personal," he writes in his last sentence, concluding with Fitzgerald's famous sentence at the end of *The Great Gatsby* about the "transitory enchanted moment" appearing in America for the "last time in history."

An American Procession strikes its own elegiac note, its own lamentation for something lost: an older idea of America (and of American literature?) appropriated from the likes of Adams and Fitzgerald. "In the deepest sense," Kazin once wrote, "we can never study modern literature or art; we can only be part of it." The book contemplates its subject by becoming an example of it.

ALAN TRACHTENBERG

A SENSE OF THE EIGHTIES

CUTTING EDGES: MAKING SENSE OF THE EIGHTIES. By Charles Krauthammer. Random House, Inc. $17.95.

Much has been written lately about the supposed shift in emphasis in the pages of *The New Republic.* It is argued that the seventy-two year-old magazine, long considered one of the cornerstones of American liberal thought, has, under Martin Peretz's direction, drifted dangerously to the right. Critics cite the fact that editorials and think-pieces in the magazine call for a tough foreign policy, strong defense measures and an end to racial quotas. Many diehard readers have canceled their subscriptions, accusing the editor-in-chief and his brash young staff of breaking ranks and taking up with —horrors! — the neoconservatives.

Of all the writers Peretz has brought to the magazine, perhaps the one who gives hardline left-wingers the greatest distress is Charles Krauthammer. *Cutting Edges*, his first book of essays, which gathers pieces written for *The Washington Post* and *Time* magazine, as well as for *The New Republic*, offers a clear indication of what all the fuss is about. The author addresses such diverse subjects as the invasion of

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Grenada, medical experimentation, football, abortion, AIDS, the rise of religious fundamentalism, OPEC, comparable worth, isolationism and the Bitburg fiasco, never once following a perceptible party line—other than the belief that liberal pieties are no longer sacrosanct.

However, the future of liberalism—and by extension the fate of the Democratic Party—is the central concern of *Cutting Edges*. Like his colleagues at *The New Republic*, Krauthammer has taken a long, hard look at the history of the left in America and, perhaps spurred on by some of the more accurate criticisms leveled at left-liberalism by the neoconservatives, has found much that is wanting. He would like to transcend the mistakes of the past—the softheadedness that has led to knee-jerk responses—and fashion what some of the pundits in the press have called a more muscular brand of liberalism.

This supposedly "new" politics is described in an essay titled "Whatever Became of the American Center?" Here Krauthammer attempts to revive the tradition of liberal internationalism, which he feels has lost its way since the death of Senator Henry Jackson. Beginning with Woodrow Wilson, liberal internationalism has striven to give democratic capitalism a human face. "At home," Krauthammer writes, "that meant developing and defending the institutional embodiments of the national conscience: civil rights, Social Security, Medicare, welfare (what ambivalent conservatives, using the language of rescue teams and circuses, call the 'safety nets'). In foreign affairs it meant an unapologetic preference for democratic pluralism everywhere, and a willingness to 'bear any burden' in defense of the cause (what the left now calls 'the cold war mentality'). In short: big government for big enterprises, at home and abroad."

Yet Krauthammer works diligently to avoid one of centrism's inherent flaws: its negativism, what he describes as an "on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand passivity that searches constantly for the lowest common denominator, that seeks the neutrality of the center as a refuge from the passion of the extremes."

There is nothing neutral or passive about any of the opinions in *Cutting Edges*, as is demonstrated (to choose but one example) in Krauthammer's defense of deterrence. The author knows just what deterrence means: that it is a plan built upon fear and that, because each superpower has the capacity to incinerate innocent people several times over, it makes any act of aggression tantamount to suicide. And yet deterrence has a track record. It has prevented the outbreak

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of nuclear war—in fact, any kind of war—between the United States and the U.S.S.R. for a generation.

Krauthammer has no patience for those who would support a nuclear freeze. As he sees it, the freeze is not a plan but only a sentiment. He admits that the millions of Americans who support the movement are expressing laudable concern over the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But as a plan, the freeze fails on its own terms. "It seeks safety," he writes, "but would jeopardize deterrence; it seeks quick action, but would delay arms control; it seeks real reductions, but removes any leverage we might have to bring them about."

Not that deterrence cannot, in principle, break down. Yet if you reject a system that has kept the peace for so long, the author submits, you are obliged to come up with an effective alternative. Deterrence is Krauthammer's choice because "it is a better means of achieving the ultimate moral aim of both sides—survival."

Krauthammer, a self-proclaimed moralist, insists upon making these kinds of distinctions, on finding a language that will not muddle significant differences. In the essay titled "On Moral Equivalence," he looks at Pol Pot, Jonas Savimbi, Eden Pastora Gomez and certain Salvadoran Marxist-Leninists, all of whom have taken up arms against their respective governments, and asks, "Is there nothing to choose between them?" Krauthammer feels that the important issue is to look at how they fight. Do they put bombs on school buses? Mines in harbors? Or do they only attack the other side's military? He concludes that these rebels all differ qualitatively and morally, as their goals are not the same. To arrive at a sound foreign policy, we must separate the totalitarians from the democrats.

"The pox-on-all-their houses sentiment," Krauthammer writes, "is not just traditional American isolationism making a comeback. It is moral exhaustion, an abdication of the responsibility to distinguish between shades of gray. The usual excuse is that the light has grown pale; the real problem is a glaze in the eye of the beholder."

Krauthammer's distaste for present-day isolationism has led him to what is clearly his most unpopular stance (at least for many readers of *The New Republic*): support for the Nicaraguan *contras*. Justification for this position hinges on one factor—that, in Krauthammer's opinion, there is no other way to move Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua to pluralism, and that a pluralist Nicaragua is the only conceivable guarantor of peace in the region. "Is it so hard," the author asks, "at a time when anti-Communist guerillas are fighting in at least four parts of the world, for Americans, of all people, to de-

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velop a theory of legitimate, democratic revolution? And is it so hard to see the connection between a Leninist Nicaragua and chronic instability in Central America?"

The issue continues to be debated, and perhaps nowhere more hotly than in the pages of *The New Republic*. In a recent issue, a number of the magazine's contributing editors, including Robert Coles, Henry Fairlie, Hendrik Hertzberg and Michael Walzer, drafted a letter critical of a pro-*contra* editorial. (Though unsigned, this editorial was quite obviously Krauthammer's handiwork.) Coles, et al., argued for a different approach to the struggle in Nicaragua, suggesting a combination of political and economic pressure, negotiations, and aid and encouragement to democracies in the area.

TNR's contributing editors are arguing that there is a serious danger in pursuing Krauthammer's politics. He would use military force when necessary, might have us intervene in Central America in the same way we did in Vietnam. But what must be acknowledged is that his is not the voice of hysteria or of the warmonger. He is a realist and, as he insists, a moralist. He understands that we must live with the uncomfortable truth that some people who appear, perhaps on the surface, to be our enemies may in fact be our best hope for establishing democratic pluralism in troubled areas of the world.

And Krauthammer is nothing if not consistent. Like his mentor Senator Jackson, he is "committed to the Western alliance and the welfare state," and believes, along with the Constitution, that "the purpose of the Union (is) to provide for both the common defense and the general welfare." In all of the essays collected in *Cutting Edges*, he has steadfastly adhered to his own stringent demands, a trait to be praised and admired in an age marked by rhetorical overkill and political foolishness.

ROBERT LEITER

A PHILOSOPHY OF NARRATIVE

TIME AND NARRATIVE. VOLUME I. By Paul Ricoeur. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. The University of Chicago Press. $25.00.

Reading Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* is like entering midstream into an already developed narrative of its own, and a

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complicated one at that. This impression would be correct, for *Time and Narrative* is only one chapter in the story of an author constantly "on the way." Now in his seventies, Ricoeur keeps emerging, phoenix-like, from the philosophical rubble of seemingly intractable problems. His narrative theory is one of these periodic manifestations, best viewed against the background of his earlier confrontations with phenomenology, structuralism, semiotics, et al. With *Time and Narrative*, narrative theory has made a "great leap forward," thanks to Ricoeur's interdisciplinary approach and constant interaction with the history of philosophy. His contribution will probably be of interest to thinkers in the social sciences, literary theory, philosophy, and even theology.

Ricoeur's intellectual pilgrimage has paralleled that of his career: he is as much at home with European existentialism as he is with Anglo-Saxon linguistic analysis; he has taught at the University of Paris and at the University of Chicago. One constant in his intellectual migrations has been his interest in the question which lay behind Kant's critical philosophy: what is man? Ricoeur's earliest books, which together comprise the incomplete *Philosophy of the Will*, attempt to unravel Kant's riddle by considering *willing* to be the phenomenological key to human being. Ricoeur's goal is to counter the negative thrust of Sartre's existentialism, particularly where human freedom is concerned. However, Ricoeur discovered that human volition is not open to such direct inspection, and so in the 1960s he looked to symbols to see what they expressed about the human condition. This led to his fascination with language, and ultimately in the 1970s to an extensive "detour" into larger questions about interpretation.

Creativity is the special problem which continues to motivate Ricoeur's work. Why should there be sense rather than nonsense? What can the imagination and its unique product, creative language, tell us about the world and human being? Ricoeur, like Pascal, wants to wager: he bets that creative language expresses certain otherwise inaccessible features of the human condition. Ricoeur's first gambit was to explore metaphors (in *The Rule of Metaphor*, University of Toronto Press, 1977), and with his book on narrative he has raised the stakes. In his preface to *Time and Narrative* Ricoeur says that his books on metaphor and narrative form a pair and were conceived together. The first volume of *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et récit*) was published in Paris by Seuil in 1983 (the second and third volumes appeared in 1984 and 1985 respectively, and an English

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translation of Volume Two is now available). Underlying his work in interpretation theory, then, is Ricoeur's desire to answer the question, what is man. But now Ricoeur sees the key to this philosophical anthropology in a theory of the creative imagination rather than the will.

Ricoeur's central insight in *Time and Narrative*, developed at great length and drawing on the history of philosophy, concerns the "healthy circle" between temporality and narrative. Ricoeur believes that narrative is a form of creative language whose unique function is to express the temporality of human existence. In Ricoeur's words, *time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.*

Book Eleven of Augustine's *Confessions* represents for Ricoeur the voice of the frustrated philosopher who is thwarted in his efforts to "explain" our experience of time: "What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me: but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled." At the end of the day, the role of all phenomenologies of time (including Heidegger's) is to make the paradoxical character of human time even more puzzling. But what the philosopher cannot explain, poetic language portrays: narrative offers a "poetic" solution, intelligibility, to the riddle of temporal experience by displaying different ways of construing human being-in-time.

Ricoeur suggests that both history and fiction, the two primary narrative types, are needed to express the temporal aspects of human existence. Accordingly, Ricoeur responds to "anti-narrativist" challenges in historiography and literary criticism. In Volume One of *Time and Narrative*, which deals with historical narrative, Ricoeur seeks to avoid two extremes: the view that narrative has nothing to do with history, and the view that history must be related to an explicitly narrative form.

The challenges to the notion of narrative history come in several varieties. Karl Hempel believes that historical explanation proceeds by subsuming events under universal laws. Fernand Braudel and the French *Annales* school focus on the "deep structures" which underlie events. According to both of these positions, narrative historiography is nonscientific. Braudel in particular is scathing in his criticism of histories written as narrative acounts, accusing them of focusing on "surface disturbances" and the "short, sharp, nervous vibrations" instead of on the "deeper currents" which shape

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events. Ricoeur takes great pains to show how Hempel and Braudel not only fail in their criticisms, but actually rely on a sort of "narrative competence" for their own accounts of historical explanation.

To a large degree, says Ricoeur, the narrative form suffers at the hands of critics such as Hempel and Braudel because they see only its episodic or linear dimension, the "and then, and then, and then." In order to appropriate the positive insights of Hempel and Braudel, Ricoeur has recourse to what he calls the "configurative dimension" of the plot. Ricoeur claims that narratives display a teleological unity as well, which is the product of the plot's power to grasp or "configure" diverse actions and events in a temporal whole.

Ricoeur is just as careful not to go to the "narrativist" extreme in historiography. Some Anglo-American philosophers, such as Arthur Danto, W. B. Gallie, Louis O. Mink, and Hayden White, have tried to reclaim the narrative form as a cognitive instrument which yields a unique type of explanation, appropriate to historical events and processes. Though Ricoeur integrates many of their insights into his own narrative theory, he does not insist on a direct connection between historiography and narrative. Histories do not have to be written in an explicitly narrative form, but they must proceed from what Ricoeur calls a "narrative competence," the competence to "follow" stories, which is common to both history and fiction.

Part Two of Volume One is an extended defense of this fundamental "narrative competence" of history. Ricoeur believes that "if history were to break every connection to *our basic narrative competence for following a story* and to the cognitive operations constitutive of our narrative understanding . . . it would lose its distinctive place in the chorus of the social sciences." According to Ricoeur, the narrative form is not simply an ornament of historical discourse, pretty packaging which makes the contents more attractive. Rather, the narrative form is a *cognitive instrument* in its own right, and historical understanding is that type of understanding which proceeds by inventing plots. To understand the actions of people in the past, we need to be able to tell and to follow stories. Various factors, settings, characters and events can be put into one history thanks to the unifying operation of the plot, its power of putting things together. This narrative configuration, this "seeing together," bears a close resemblance to what Kant called "judgment" in his third *Critique.* This similarity to Kant is not coincidental, for Kant is never far behind in Ricoeur's works. Ricoeur would agree with Kant that "pure" or speculative reason cannot "explain" the human experience of time. But in the spirit of

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Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Ricoeur seems to view the narrative operation itself as a kind of "poetic" reason, and "poetic" is here being used in its original sense, *poiesis* (a making, a creation). Poetic reason creates or discovers sense out of nonsense. Narrative makes temporal experience, human existence, *meaningful*.

The similarities between history and fiction are not only epistemological, but ontological (the reference or truth of narrative is the special subject of the third volume). Ricoeur considers both history and fiction to be forms of the creative imagination which expand our vision of reality: history displays human possibilities that *have* been, fiction shows human possibilities that *might* be. Together, history and fiction form a virtual catalogue of what is humanly possible in time. In this way, Ricoeur's interests in text interpretation and philosophical anthropology converge, and Ricoeur moves a step closer to answering his, and Kant's, question, what is man?

KEVIN J. VANHOOZER

ELSA MORANTE

ARACOELI. By Elsa Morante. Translated by William Weaver. Random House, Inc. $17.95.

It is difficult to imagine what a reader unfamiliar with Elsa Morante's earlier fiction would make of her last novel, *Aracoeli*. This book is disconcerting: finely rendered by William Weaver, lush *fin-de-siècle* prose clashes violently with the sordid details of the narrator's modern alienated existence; objective self-analysis, familiar from much recent fiction, alternates with passages of frenetic romanticization. How does this book ask to be read?

Simply put, the plot concerns a middle-aged Italian man who, haunted by his dead mother, decides to take a trip to the small Spanish village of her birth. He is painfully unfulfilled, unintegrated into life either through love or work. Unsuccessful at both heterosexual and homosexual love, Emanuele experiences life as a series of rejections; and his imagination feverishly centers on his mother, Aracoeli, who was the source of the only positive passion he had ever known. Following an ancient narrative model, the outer, spatial journey represents an inner movement through layers of memory

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back to the self. As Emanuele moves toward his putative goal—his mother's village—he is assailed by real and imagined memories that reveal the mystery, unseizability, and futility of his past. Narrating, he is capable of the most excruciating realism and the most mystifying poetization. What becomes abundantly clear is that the hopes, dreams, and sheer beauty of his youth have been battered almost beyond recognition by his adult life. Emanuele is, in short, a loser. At times he seems mad with pain and need, and his obsessiveness and hypersensitivity identify him with some of the great madmen of Western literature. The question for the reader, as in all such narratives, is what general significance to find in these howls from the depths.

Elsa Morante's fictions are the fruit of intense sensitivity to inner experience, as well as of a deep love for storytelling. From her first novel, *Menzogna e sortilegio* (*House of Liars*) to *L'Isola di Arturo* (*Arthur's Island*), to the much-debated monumental war novel *La Storia* (*History*), Morante consistently plumbed the depths of what she once called, in an interview, "the first truth and most human reality of the human drama: psychological reality." She never deviated from her own, very personal, definition of realism: poetic invention that is, no matter how fabulistic in tone, event, and style, true to human psychology and to the portrayal of humankind's relationship to the external world. Her privileging of character over event is clear in her own discussions of her art. She once elaborated a typology of characters that represents the three basic psychological orientations, and the characters in her novels tend to adhere to this typology. There are the "Achilles" type (passionate and vital involvement in life); the "Don Quixote" type (solemn and epic evasion of real life through fantasy); and the "Hamlet" type (funereal contemplation of life that results in opting for real or figural non-being). Although Emanuele is most strongly identifiable as a "Hamlet," he partakes of some aspects of the other two types as well.

Other constants in Morante's novels reappear in *Aracoeli*: concentration on the family as the archetypal human configuration; emphasis on the interplay of memory and imagination as tools of knowledge; preference for child protagonists. Although Emanuele is an adult narrator, most of his memories center on childhood and the paradise of innocence that becomes the hell of mature disillusionment. In *Il mondo salvato dai ragazzini* (*The World Saved by Children*), a collection of poetry, prose, and drama never translated into English, Morante divides the world into the "Happy Few" and the "Unhappy

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Many." In the former category she places all those who retained a childlike exuberance into adulthood (Mozart, Rimbaud), and in the latter are all those who sold out to the "realities" of adult life. Children are, of course, marginal to the centralized institutions of power that organize and rule our adult world, and it is with the emarginated—youths, illiterates, the poor, the mad—that Morante's sympathies always lay. It is in this sense that she can be read as a political writer. In *Aracoeli*, both the naive peasant girl who becomes Emanuele's mother and her young partisan brother, an anarchist who dies in the Spanish Civil War, are placed in sharp, if implicit, contrast to the bourgeois repressiveness of Aracoeli's husband's family, all of whom unthinkingly adhere to the values of fascism.

If we read *Aracoeli* as a political allegory, we might understand Emanuele's preference for fantasy, as well as Aracoeli's extreme sexual rebellion (she becomes insatiable and eventually leaves the family home to live as a whore), as desperate attempts to escape the "mature," stifling environment of Italian society under the fascist regime. But the novel is too complex to be read in a monotonal key. Aracoeli's decline from a beautiful girlish mother to a crazed whore is also the result of bodily decay. She is ruined by disease (we can assume cancer) that diminishes her corporeally and spiritually as brutally as does the more abstract force of repressive politics. The same is true of her husband, who descends into the hell of alcoholism after her death and dies a ruined man. Emanuele becomes physically repulsive as he ages; many passages recount his intense self-hatred as an overweight, sagging, middle-aged man. This emphasis on the horror of the body—a stark *memento mori*—distinguishes this novel from Morante's earlier books.

In vivid contrast to the negative details of "real life" are those passages in which Emanuele reveals his native temperament that, in his own words, is "more inclined to visions than to inquiries." Like his creator, he is not interested in documentable fact and readily admits that much of what he recounts is "apocryphal memory," the fruit of fantasy. Thus, in movingly lyrical prose, he describes his birth, his suckling, the magical garden outside his childhood apartment. It is difficult to reconcile this delicate sensitivity with the ugly, awkward, maladjusted man whose life consists of violent encounters with homosexual gigolos, solitary nights in impersonal third-class hotel rooms, and equally lonely days in a two-room publishing firm where he translates worthless pamphlets. There is no doubt that most of us would avoid contact with such a person were we to come upon

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him in real life; Morante, instead, insists on intimate and disturbing contact, for it seems that she wished us to see this tale of woe as exemplary. Emanuele, it is implied, is not, after all, marginal. He is the norm, an exaggerated but not unrecognizable version of any one of us. Whether he is the result primarily of psychological, political, or physical forces is not explicitly answered, however. All aspects of adult life are ruinous: this is a book of lamentation, not of hope.

Morante once insisted that even the most tragic of stories could be positive in that readers would experience a rush of renewed vitality if the story were rendered artistically. This story, instead, leaves us with a sense of the great waste of childhood potential, and the futility of the imagination as a counterforce to bodily decay, political repression, and spiritual diminishment. We are asked to mourn, as does the author herself, the fate of Emanuele, for it is our shared fate —or, more specifically, it appears to have been the late author's perception of her own fate. As Gerard Manley Hopkins put it, "It is the blight man was born for,/It is Margaret you mourn for." It was Elsa she mourned for.

REBECCA WEST

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

Elaine Hoffman Baruch's review of my book *Helene Deutsch* ("Truth and Fiction," *PR*, 2, 1986) is an example of how psychoanalytic sectarianism has its Stalinist side. Her attack was inspired by Kurt Eissler, whom she calls "the revered psychoanalyst."

Eissler has been pursuing me for ideologicial crimes since my book *Brother Animal* was published in 1969. My excellent personal rapport with Helene Deutsch was severely strained as Eissler took up the cause of defending Freud against the imaginary idea (which Baruch repeats) that I had "blamed" Freud for Tausk's suicide. Eissler pressed his attack against *Brother Animal* with two books, two articles, one unpublished essay, and letters to professional journals.

In 1977 I renewed my friendship with Helene, which had first begun in 1964. Whether Helene picked me as a biographer, or I initiated the idea, is impossible for me to disentangle. The decision we reached in 1978 was attractive to us both. I had a lawyer draw up five contracts covering the publication of the biography, her letters, her psychoanalytic papers, her first book on female sexuality, and her diary as a young girl. I believe that casts light on Baruch's contention that "Roazen passes off" the diary "as Deutsch's."

When my book appeared I received a telephone call from a Boston analyst. Eissler had called him with the news that the diary was not Helene's but Christine Olden's. I knew her to have been a patient of Helene's. Baruch does not credit Eissler for this information about the diary. And she is wrong in writing: "Helene Deutsch's cupboard, I'm told, was full of unpublished materials by analysands, patients, and colleagues, as well as by her." There was in fact no such quaint-sounding cupboard. With Helene's approval I went through all the papers that she had, and found none of the unpublished works by others that Baruch alleges.

Eissler's own informant about the diary was Edward Kronold. There was no way that I on my own could have come up with the idea that the Mädi Fournier of the diary was Christine Olden. Oddly enough Baruch treats Helene's *Confrontations with Myself* as thoroughly reliable, when there is abundant evidence of the quasi-fictional quality of autobiographies. As far as the diary goes, I colluded in a mistake about which I feel very bad.

I would have thought that the next step would be to wonder why this solitary diary was so important to Helene that she had proceeded to make it her own. The diary did I think become a double for Helene, which was the interpretive line I had taken in my biography: both Helene and Olden were infatuated with the identical Viennese actor, involved with married men, hostile to their mothers, etcetera.

Ever since I heard of Eissler's knowing about the issue of the diary, I have been waiting for the other shoe to drop publicly. I expected to hear it from an orthodox analyst in a professional journal. But I had underestimated the eagerness of some to publicize the psychoanalytic Kremlin's latest campaign.

As for the issue of Felix Deutsch's sexuality, my book contains evidence which appears in his correspondence. The two words that Baruch objects to ("another case") in connection with a passage in one of Helene's writings were spoken to me

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directly by her as I read over to her the whole paper. It is therefore not quite the "nonsense" that Baruch claims. Nor would the account I reconstructed of Felix's sexual history be at odds with his later becoming a beloved analyst.

One sentence in Baruch's review is outrageous: Roazen's "questions, I'm told, eventually had to be stopped by the family because Roazen's insistence upset Deutsch so much." The evasive "I'm told" speaks for itself. At no time did the family ever have to interfere with my interviewing Helene on any such grounds. They subsequently agreed with the *American Journal of Psychiatry* that I write the obituary of Helene.

In Baruch's last paragraph she alleges that in my book I ignore Eissler's contesting *Brother Animal.* On the contrary, I included in *Helene Deutsch,* among other recent new material, an eyewitness account of why Freud refused to analyze Tausk.

I think that knowledge of psychoanalysis is ill-served by blind defenses of an entrenched power center.

Paul Roazen
Toronto, Ontario

Elaine Hoffman Baruch replies:

It is not surprising that Paul Roazen, whose favorite figure of speech in *Helene Deutsch* is the cliche, has now turned to name-calling in his response to my review ("an example of how psychoanalytic sectarianism has its Stalinist side," he calls it). My "attack" was not "inspired by Kurt Eissler." Mr. Roazen provides sufficient material of his own to inspire attack.

Roazen says, "Baruch does not credit Eissler for this information about the diary." But it was not from Dr. Eissler that I received this information. Because my source did not want to be identified, I refrained from naming him. Obviously, Roazen does not have such scruples himself. "There was no way that I on my own could have come up with the idea that the Mädi Fournier of the diary was Christine Olden," he claims. Maybe not, but any one of the reasons that I cite would have led a careful reader to conclude that Mädi Fournier could not have been Helene Deutsch, anyone, that is, who wasn't indulging in fantasy.

Roazen's defense of his account of Felix Deutsch's sexuality in no way answers my charge that Roazen distorts case material at will to suit his often questionable purposes. The last line makes Roazen sound like a poor little boy kept from the banquet table. In fact, he has tried to gobble up the whole Deutsch feast, giving many of his readers the impression that there is nothing more to be gathered at her table. That is what is most unfortunate about his biography.

Elaine Hoffman Baruch
New York, New York

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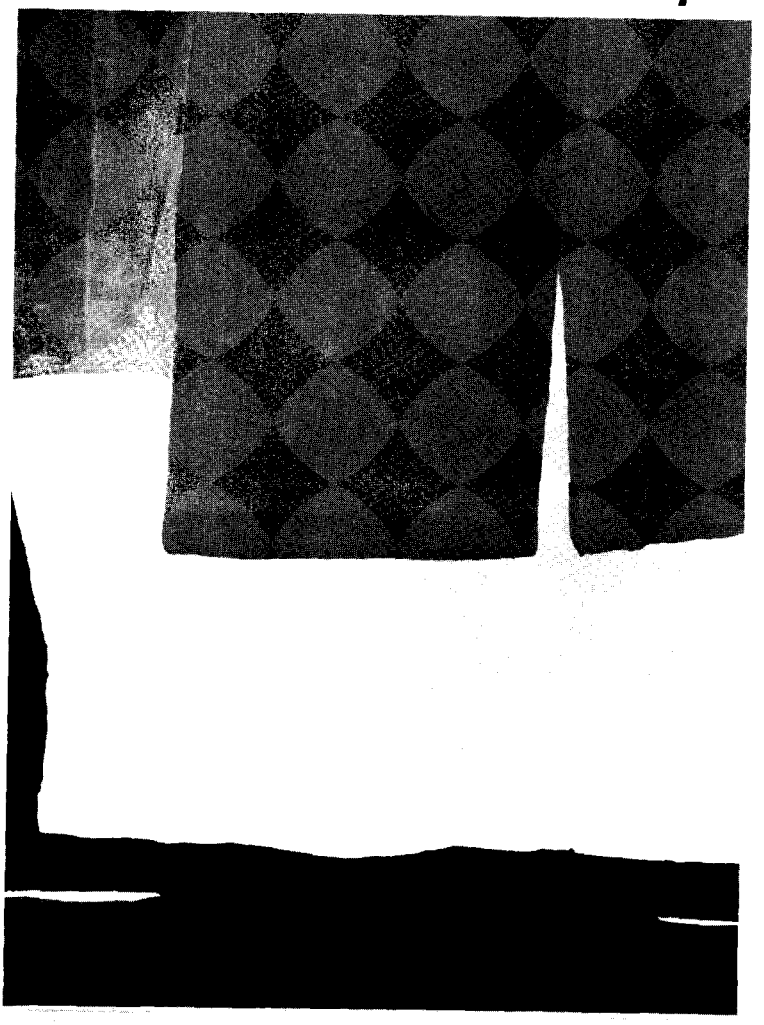

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